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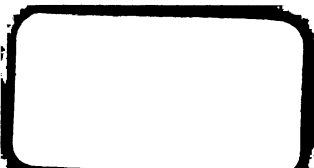
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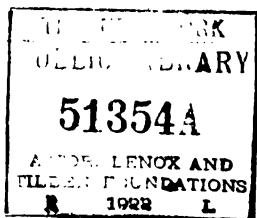
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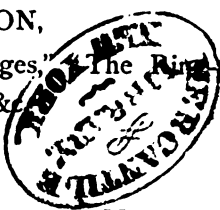
WHAT WILL SOCIETY SAY?

A NOVEL.

BY MERVYN MERRITON,

Author of "Romances of the Chivalric Ages," "The Ring-woods of Ringwood," &c., &c.

CHAPTER I.



OUR story opens in breezy Boulogne-sur-Mer. If, Reader, possessing freedom of locomotion, you have never visited that Anglo-French sea-port, I advise you to repair your error of omission at the first convenient season. If you know it, you need not be told what manner of place it is; in summer how crowded and pleasure-driven, in winter how abandoned to transit commerce, and (in its English circles) to intervisiting, dining, and dancing after the formal English pattern.

The bathing season of 186— has been over nearly a month. November has set in with rapid alternations of weather, favourable and unfavourable to British constitutional pedestrianism; on one day, a bright sun and cloudless sky overhead, with a keen north-easter sweeping the sandy dust into your eyes, on the next a sunless sky and a wild south-wester lashing the sea to fury and devastation.

The afternoon on which I request the reader's company at the further end of the East Pier was of the latter sort.

One couple among the few occupants of that somewhat rude construction has a special interest for us. They are mother and son. A tall, dignified woman was Mrs. Aylesmere, wearing her hair, which was tinged with grey, in simple

bands. Her dress was of sombre hue, though fashionable in make. Her face was of classical outline, and pleasant expression, yet deeply lined and bearing a sad and care-worn expression.

Frank Aylesmere was a fine young fellow, his countenance bearing a strong, though masculine resemblance to his mother's, and with eyes darker and brows more marked than hers. His look was bright and sunny, his manner graceful and pleasant, his form tall and manly, his carriage strikingly bold and erect.

Arrived at the end of the pier, Mrs. Aylesmere sat down, while Frank strained his gaze out to sea in the direction of the steamer from Folkstone, now in sight.

"We had better return, mother," Frank said; "she comes on at a good rate. With your slow walking we shall hardly reach the harbour before she is in."

Mrs. Aylesmere, easy of persuasion in small things as in great, rose and took her son's arm. "Geoff will have had a bad passage, poor fellow," she presently said.

"Quite indifferent to Geoffry," Frank observed. "He'll smoke from pier to pier, whatever the passage."

I pray you, reader, note, that speaking of the same individual, the mother called him, with a certain softness, "Geoff," the son, somewhat sternly, "Geoffry."

The individual in question was Geoffry Aylesmere, Esquire, of Lentworth, the widowed Mrs. Aylesmere's eldest son, Frank's elder brother.

While mother and son pursue their way with measured steps, suited to the widow's declining health, let us learn some particulars concerning them.

The Aylesmeres of Lentworth were, a century and a half back, one of the leading families of East Middleshire; but extravagant hospitality, and a series of parliamentary contests, had, during the last three generations, considerably reduced them in the social scale. Mark Aylesmere, the father of Geoffry now arriving by the Folkstone steamer, and Philip Francis (generally known as Frank) now supporting his mother along the pier, had been dead rather more than eight years. The Lentworth Estate, which had come to him already much shorn of its former proportions, had,

during his ownership, been reduced to the lowest possible pitch, both as regarded extent and condition. Mark Aylesmere, though possessing an attractive exterior, and much of that charm of manner which had descended to his second son, was wanting in solidity of character, and remarkable for little else than his extreme good nature. Brought up with great expectations, astonished, on the death of his uncle, from whom, as heir in tail, he inherited Lentworth, to find how feebly those expectations were realised, he yet totally lacked the power of grappling with the situation, and cutting the coat of his mode of life according to the cloth of his resources; so, with an income of scarcely seven thousand a year, he continued to spend, during the eight years of his proprietorship, something like twenty-five, fifteen, twelve thousand, and so on, according to a scale descending with the diminishing measure of his credit.

The result was that he died, leaving his widow and two sons, aged fifteen and eleven respectively, with an income, dower and settlement included, of barely two thousand a year. He dying suddenly and intestate, no guardians had been appointed for his sons. Mrs. Aylesmere undertook the entire management of their education and control of their property—a responsibility for which, in truth, the poor lady was but ill-fitted. Brought up—according to a stereotyped phrase—in the lap of luxury, of a totally colourless character and yielding temper, she had passed her married life in a sort of dream, from which she was only aroused by the explanation, laid before her by the family lawyer at her husband's death.

This was the state of affairs which then came to light.

Geoffry, being heir to the fee simple of the estate, as last in tail, no definite arrangement for clearing off the debts by sale could be effected till he should come of age, when he would have full power to do as might seem good to him. In the meantime, it was calculated that the interest on mortgages, and the outlay necessitated by the miserable condition of the farm buildings, together with the widow's dower of six hundred pounds, would absorb very nearly five thousand pounds annually, leaving a clear income of some twelve hundred pounds.

"Now, of this twelve hundred," said Colonel Briarly, Mrs.

Aylesmere's half-brother, her senior by many years, and her principal adviser, when they were closeted together shortly after her husband's death, "you ought to lay aside all but a couple of hundreds. These you may spend in addition to your dower of six hundred, and two hundred and fifty interest on your father's settlement of five thousand. Well, Julia, do you suppose you can manage this?"

"Do *you*, John?" asked the widow, helplessly.

"Come, come," snapped out the colonel, "it's rather hard lines your saddling me with the responsibility of thinking for you as well as advising you. All I can say is, you must try. People say money goes a great way in some parts of France—Boulogne, for instance."

Mrs. Aylesmere looked dolefully at her counsellor.

"Miss Plaistow told me you had an idea of going to Boulogne," the colonel continued.

"Miss Plaistow's idea was that I could not do better."

"Miss Plaistow is quite right. You can't do better."

Now, the truth of the matter was, that Colonel Briarly, aware of his sister's readiness to agree with anybody who would take the trouble to think for her, and having special reasons for wishing to get her out of the way, had already settled with his own selfish thoughts that she should live at Boulogne, and to this intent had obtained for her an introduction to the aforesaid Miss Plaistow, a spinster long resident there, who had, without much difficulty, talked her into acquiescence with his views, and her (Miss Plaistow's) own predilections.

"Miss Plaistow," rejoined the widow, "was positively enthusiastic on the subject. For her, Boulogne, you know, is an earthly paradise. She let out to me its chief recommendation in her eyes—that you may be pretty sure of living rent free. You can, she says, get a good house for twelve hundred and fifty francs—fifty pounds. Interest on cost of furnishing she puts at another fifty pounds, taxes and other charges, twenty-five—a hundred and twenty-five in all. Well, during the bathing season—three months—you may let your house for the whole money, while you take a run over to England and visit your friends."

"Or," the Colonel broke in, hastily, "go to some cheaper

neighbouring locality. You know, Julia, travelling with a family is expensive."

The impressiveness with which the Colonel spoke told upon Mrs. Aylesmere, though she was not remarkably penetrating. His meaning, she perceived, framed in other words, would have run thus: "Of course, if you do come to England, you'll expect me to receive you. Pray don't come, for I haven't the most remote idea of receiving you."

And the result had proved the accuracy of her perception; for not once during the whole period which elapsed from the setting up of her tent in Boulogne to the present time—in all twelve years—had she been enabled by any art of feminine epistolography, to obtain for herself or her boys an invitation to partake of the smallest particle of her brother's hospitality.

The lapse of these twelve years had brought Geoffry and Frank to the ages of twenty-eight and twenty-four respectively.

Geoffry united with his father's characteristics of recklessness and extravagance an amount of hardness and selfishness, which had been wanting to that good-natured spendthrift; and Mrs. Aylesmere's economical projects had gradually broken down, chiefly through the ceaseless demands made upon her savings by her eldest son during his educational career. By reason of that strange obliquity of moral vision which occasionally possesses the maternal mind, Geoffry, although by many degrees the least worthy of her two sons, was unmistakably her favourite. To begrudge either of her two boys anything that she had the power to give was foreign to her nature; but she would systematically part with an important sum of money to Geoffry, more readily than with one of far less amount to Frank.

Up to a certain point, Frank, at once of an affectionate, generous nature, and filled with the true English instinct of primogeniture, repined not at this preference; but as time went on, it was carried to an extent which roused in him jealousy of his brother, and even weakened his love for his mother. Its principal effect on his character was to throw his naturally warm feelings back on himself, and to render him morbidly sensitive. Shallow observers soon came to call him moody. Those who read him more accurately said that he was lonely in spirit and craving for affection. This sort of

isolation afforded free play for the development of his excellent abilities, a development greatly assisted—with a view to his entry into the Foreign Office—by an English clergyman resident in Boulogne, at once a gentleman and a scholar, with whom his mother had placed him.

In those easy-going days competitive examinations were unknown to candidates for government offices. Places were given according to parliamentary or private interest ; but Frank Aylesmere would probably, when, at the age of eighteen, he entered the Foreign Office, have found his powers little taxed by any preliminary examination to which he could possibly have been subjected. Besides being a good classical scholar, French was as familiar to him as his native English ; while he spoke both German and Italian exceedingly well. As a Government employé, he was attentive to his duties and never failed to give satisfaction to his superiors. When we now make his acquaintance, he has been six years in the office, and he is on his annual vacation visit to his mother.

With characters such as Geoffry Aylesmere's, in the absence of paternal authority, youthful indiscretions become rapidly developed into precocious vices. It happened, unfortunately too, that shortly after he came of age and entered upon the ownership of Lentworth, the lease of the Nimrod, who had occupied the mansion, park, and home-farm, terminated. On his declining to renew, Geoffry, much against the advice of his uncle and his lawyers, determined to live at the place. Several farms had necessarily been sold, and the estate thereby reduced both in extent and importance. Geoffry flattered himself he could live quietly with a very small establishment, see little company, keep only a couple of hunters, and so on ; resolutions which proved like ice before the sun, when certain of his Oxford chums, some possessed themselves of wealth, others of the needy hanger-on sort, began to make his house their head quarters. These young gentlemen brought in their train much fast living, a little quiet play, stables filled with horses, and coach-houses with carriages. The upshot of it all was that, following in his father's footsteps, in two years he spent the income of about six, and a sharp pull up became necessary. The steward and manager of the estate—a personage concerning whom more

anon—was called to counsel, certain documents were signed, and a sum of ready money was placed at his disposal for the purposes of foreign travel—a sum sufficient to last a couple of years with prudence, six months without it. And here he now is, having started on that foreign travel, proposing to remain a few days with his mother and brother at Boulogne, *en route* for Paris.

CHAPTER II.

THE steamer, though entering the harbour, was yet somewhat distant from the landing-place, when Mrs. Aylesmere and Frank arrived there.

Among the persons attracted to the spot, some to meet expected friends, some to gratify simple curiosity, they recognised that Miss Plaistow, in whose counsels had originated the widow's migration to Boulogne. The spinster's age might be somewhere between forty-five and fifty. She did her best to inspire faith in the lower figure. Her person offered nothing remarkable, nor was her face objectionable, save in the matter of her nose, which was obviously of ornithological formation. Opinions differed as to what bird's beak it most resembled. I, myself, only decided the point when, walking one day along the western quay, I came upon a British merchantman christened the *Albatross* (hailing, if you are particular, from the port of Goole). The figure head of that vessel was a revelation to me, for in the bird's beak I recognised Miss Plaistow's nose.

"How d'y'e do, Mrs. Aylesmere?" (Frank on perceiving Miss Plaistow, had dropped his mother's arm and turned away, so did not come in for his share of her salutation). "I hear your eldest son is coming to see you." (Miss Plaistow somehow heard everything). "How glad you must be! Such a rare event. I don't see Mr. Frank. Not

up yet, perhaps. The young men do keep such dreadful hours now-a-days. I say" (in a low voice, as her finger followed the direction of her glance, which was rather a vicious one), "Look at Captain Courtland and that bold widow Fiskin! Isn't it a shame? Her husband not dead seven months. Never saw anything like it, and I have seen a good many queer things at Boulogne" (as indeed she had, besides imagining, not to say inventing, a good many more), "Ah! here comes *la petite* Duhamel — seems expecting somebody by the boat. She's one I never did hear any harm of." (Praise, indeed, this, from such a quarter.) "But here's the boat." And to Mrs. Aylesmere's infinite relief the voluble spinster quitted her to take up a favourable position for seeing the passengers land. In her hurry to obtain this position, she failed to observe that as she named *la petite* Duhamel, Frank Aylesmere had looked anxiously around him as if in search of the person indicated. This was fortunate, since Miss Plaistow, who was a sort of ambulant Scandalous Chronicle, would not have failed to construct, even upon such simple movement, a theory subversive of the favourable opinion she had just expressed of the young person in question.

"There's Geoff!" Mrs. Aylesmere exclaimed, pressing the arm of Frank, whose eyes were fixed in a contrary direction from the steamer—to confess the truth, upon the identical *petite* Duhamel, recently pointed out by Miss Plaistow—"Don't you see him, standing near the paddle-box?"

"Yes, mother, yes," Frank answered, impatiently.

"He doesn't see us, Frank,"

"He's not looking for us, mother."

"No; he's talking to somebody."

"Ay, that fat man. A German, I should say."

"Geoff always make friends."

"Acquaintances, dear mother, and very queer ones too sometimes," after which Frank glanced again at *la petite* Duhamel, apparently deeming her a more agreeable object of contemplation than his brother.

And now the passengers, male and female, are struggling up the steps which lead to the landing-place, the joy they experience at their release from the horrors of the Channel

passage, save with a few exceptions, scarcely subduing the misery imprinted on their countenances by the two hours of torture they have undergone.

One of these exceptions is to be found in the person of Geoffrey Aylesmere, who, cigar in mouth, has been so occupied with deliberately getting together his lighter *impedimenta* of great coat, hand-bags, and such-like "traps," and in watching the same as a sailor carries them ashore, that only on feeling his arm seized by his mother, has he become aware of the presence of that anxious parent and his brother.

"Ah, mother! you here?" he cries, and taking his cigar from his mouth he places his hirsute cheek against her longing lips.

"How are you, old man?" to Frank; "wish you'd just follow that fellow with my traps, and call me up a carriage, while I look out my keys. I've got no end of portmanteaus and all that sort of thing."

"Quite right to make yourself comfortable, dear," said Mrs. Aylesbury, left alone with her eldest and dearest son, as she was wont to call him. "Ah! there's a gentleman making signs to you with his umbrella. Poor man! He looks as yellow as saffron."

"It's that German—Baron something," Geoffrey quietly remarked, turning to the person indicated, "All right, Baron. I'll call on you at the Nord some time in the evening. Ta, ta. Take care of yourself!"

"Who is he?" asked the widow.

"A fellow I've cottoned to on the passage, mother; a German with a hundred or two of quarterings. Poor devil! Awfully sick at first—gave him a sip of my old cognac—set him up—quite himself again—going on to Paris—something diplomatic—useful sort of man to know. We've agreed to travel together."

"Well, Geoff," Mrs. Aylesmere observed, "I can't say I like his expression and general appearance."

"Mustn't judge fellows hastily, mother; and, talking of appearance, there's an odd-looking party stumbling up the ladder, clutching a heap of books and papers."

The man alluded to was pallid, gaunt, and poorly clad, apparently about sixty years old.

"Poor creature!" cried Mrs. Aylesmere, pityingly, "he must have been dreadfully ill on the passage."

"Not a bit of it. Talked the whole two hours to anybody he could lay hold of. A little touched in the upper story. I should say, got some wonderful scheme for paying off the national debt — Hullo! There's a stunning pretty girl touching his arm over the rope."

"Why, that's *la petite* Duhamel! The man must be her father—step-father by-the-bye, I believe he is."

"Pray who and what is *la petite* Duhamel?"

"A clever young pianist. Ah! Here comes Frank."

"Not coming, mother, but stopping to speak to your clever young pianist. Hullo, Frank! Look sharp!"

"All right," said Frank, hurrying away from the young person in question. "YOU must look sharp or the carriage I've secured may slip away. Give your keys to this commissioner."

In short, Frank appeared anxious to draw his brother's attention away from *la petite* Duhamel, which it was not easy to do, for the girl's beauty was as undeniable as the confusion he himself displayed on her account.

After dinner the two brothers strolled out. Geoffrey had promised, as we know, to call on the German Baron, whose acquaintance he had, in the facile mode usual with him, made on board the steamer.

"But surely," Frank remonstrated, as they neared the Hotel du Nord, "you don't seriously think of leaving so soon. Mother flatters herself you'll give her a week at least."

"A week, Frank! What on earth should I find to do in a place like this? If I had that little pianist to spoon, it might be different—eh, old man?"

"Oh, don't imagine the girl's anything to me, Geoffrey!"

"There's nothing to be ashamed of in her, Frank—quite the contrary."

"The fact is," Frank said, and he certainly said it rather apologetically, "a couple of days ago, I interfered to send about his business a Frenchman who was evidently annoying her with his addresses. The fellow seemed inclined to show fight, but when I gave him my name, he thought better of it,

and made himself scarce. When he had left, she thanked me, but added that he was only one of her *coiffeur's* young men."

"Vive l'égalité! Rather a let down. But did you previously know who she was?"

"Quite well. Heard her play several times at concerts. She's wonderfully clever."

"Well, then, if I do stay over to-morrow, you must introduce me. But it's long odds I don't. My friend, the Baron is very anxious to get on to Paris. We'll see whether he has changed his plans."

The baron's plans proving to be unchanged, Mrs. Aylesmere was doomed to learn—which the poor soul did with equal surprise and sorrow—that her favourite, but not worthiest son, was under the imperative necessity of departing early next day.

This departure she witnessed with such equanimity as she could derive from the hope that Geoffry would devote to her a greater portion of his delightful society, on the occasion of his return from the continental tour on which he was believed to have just set forth.

Frank, whose visit was now drawing to a close, did his best to console his mother, making great efforts to draw her from her solitary arm-chair, and induce her to be the companion of his daily constitutionals. He also persuaded her, one day, to call with him upon *la petite* Duhamel, and her step-father, Septimus Oldham.

Some seven or eight years prior to the opening of our story, Septimus Oldham, who was in some indefinite and mysterious way connected with the press, had come to Boulogne, as he gave out, for change of air, but in point of fact under some temporary financial pressure, and had taken a small lodging in the house of the thrifty and thriving relict of a defunct professor of music, by name Duhamel.

He had originally intended to remain at Boulogne a few weeks, but he reckoned without his hostess. The widow, finding him to be a bachelor of easy going habits, and espying in him an eligible successor to the departed Duhamel, speedily marked him for her own. Within two months from the date of his arrival, she succeeded in conveying him

successively to the British Consulate, the Mairie, and the French Protestant temple—she was of the reformed religion—and so having him duly bound in *vinculis matrimonii*.

He the more readily inclined to become passive—for so he practically did—in Madame Veuve Duhamel's hands, that he had from the first formed a strong affection for her little daughter and only child, Marie; and when, at the end of a five years' not particularly harmonious companionship, the good lady was carried from her lodging-house and her lodgers to her last home in the cemetery, the widower found speedy consolation for his loss in the pleasant society of his merry-hearted, bright-eyed step-daughter, then about fourteen years of age.

Marie, who inherited all her father's talent, had been early destined for the musical profession, giving promise of no ordinary success in that career. At the time of our making her acquaintance she was nearly seventeen. Her voice was as yet hardly developed, but as a pianist, she had exhibited considerable power on the occasion of some concerts, at which she had already performed.

Mrs. Aylesmere, after her visit to Marie Duhamel, invited the young artist to her house. She came thrice during Frank's stay, once accompanied by her eccentric step-father, on which latter occasion, it is needless to observe that the younger man devoutly wished the elder at Jericho. And here, without entering very deeply into Marie's secret thoughts, I may say it was well for her peace of mind, that the young gentleman's duties at the Foreign Office called him away as speedily as was the case.

Mrs. Aylesmere's eyes, during those three pleasant musical evenings, were those at once of a woman and a mother, so she carefully abstained from informing her son of the fact, communicated to her by Oldham, that the principal object of his recent visit to England had been to make arrangements for placing Marie under an eminent professor in London, and for their early departure thither.

Madame Duhamel had left behind her, for the benefit of her husband and her daughter, besides a small sum in "rentes" and sundry household effects, an invaluable man servant, of the old and now well nigh extinct French type.

François (he had never been known by any other name), was, at the present time, probably half a century old, but at twenty-five he could hardly have been more vigorous, light-handed, and swift-footed. To say that there was nothing within the range of a man (or woman) servant's duties which he could not perform, would be to sadly underrate his powers. There was no handicraftsman necessary to a house owner or occupier, whose functions he could not assume with more or less completeness.

Boulogne is remarkable for the (external) cleanliness of its houses. François had ever been Madame Duhamel's only house painter, white-washer, and paper-hanger. If windows were smashed or shutters broken, François was prepared to glaze the one or mend the other. Did a plank on the floor rise, or a curtain-rod fall, straightway François' hammer and nails were called into requisition. If a slate or a tile was blown out of the roof, if a crack appeared in a water pipe François was equally ready with his moistened mortar or his molten lead. To tell what carpets he had cut out, sewn together, and laid down; what tables, sofas, chairs, and so on, he had patched and nailed, and glued; what locks he had taken to pieces, cleaned, and put together again; what indescribable and inconceivable odds and ends in the way of furniture he had saved from the fire, and rendered serviceable to a long succession of season visitors, would be to give the items of a tremendous cabinet-maker's bill.

The departure of Oldham and Marie to England decided upon, the question arose, what was to become of François? The good fellow, regarding himself as in some sort the guardian of Monsieur and Mademoiselle, was profoundly afflicted, in his own phrase, at the prospect of being separated from them; yet he firmly declined to entertain the notion of accompanying them to London—that triste and sun-deserted modern Babylon, of which he had heard such terrible travellers' tales.

Oh! he assured Mademoiselle (he rarely entered into explanation with Monsieur, who lived in a mental sphere utterly incomprehensible to him), that it was out of the question—it was to the last point impossible.

That impossibility taken for granted, "what," Marie asked



him, "did he propose to do? Would he return *dans son pays*, or take another service at Boulogne?"

"Well," he replied, "he would confide his plans for the future to Mademoiselle. He had long aspired to behold Paris—that city which he had been taught to regard as the exact opposite to London in every respect. He intended to place himself there as *garçon* in a restaurant or hotel, with a view to ultimately setting up as the proprietor of some similar establishment. He was, as Mademoiselle knew, of economical habits, so he had been able to put by a round sum of money. Moreover he was the only child of his brave old father, who possessed a considerable number of hectares of highly-productive land in Normandy. Still he repudiated the notion that he was about to bid a final farewell to Mademoiselle and Monsieur. They would exchange addresses, and he firmly believed that the tide of events would sooner or later bring them in contact.

How far honest François was right in these anticipations we shall learn hereafter. For the present we are compelled to take leave as well of him as of Mademoiselle and Monsieur.

CHAPTER III.

COLONEL JOHN BRIARLY has been mentioned as Mrs. Aylesmere's half-brother. The Colonel, who had long since retired from active military life, was a bachelor, and a beau of the old school. Doubtless this *ci-devant* warrior would have bristled up at the charge of selfishness. For that matter, what man or woman ever did, does, or will plead guilty to such accusation? Yet it is undeniable that he existed mainly for his own individual gratification.

He was hospitable in the sense that he liked good living, and hated solitude; while he rarely gave money for any

charitable purpose, unless he expected to see his name in some published list of subscribers as the result of his donation. His style of living for a man who had begun life with only a younger son's portion appeared luxurious in the extreme. People wondered how on earth old Briarly—even good financier as he notoriously was—contrived to inhabit those expensive lodgings in St. James's Street, to keep those two well-appointed equipages (to wit, a cosy pair-horse double-spring brougham, and the last curricule about town), and to give those *recherché* dinners, almost the best prandial symposia, for males exclusively, in all London.

The Colonel's solicitor alone of living men, besides the Colonel himself, could have, during the life of his principal, enlightened the marvellers thereon. Now that he has shuffled off this mortal coil, all who care to know have learnt that he had sunk every shilling of his money in a life annuity.

One Sunday morning, about six months after Frank's return to the Foreign Office from his holiday visit at Boulogne, that young government employé might have been seen in his uncle's comfortable little dining-room—breakfast having been concluded—sitting across a smoking-chair, smoking one of his uncle's prime havannahs. Near him, the Colonel, attired in a brocaded dressing-gown such as was worn by the late William Farren when he played "Lord Ogleby," lazily reclined in an arm-chair, which was a miracle of mechanical art, susceptible of being raised up, let down, elongated, wheeled backwards, forwards, sideways, placed at any required angle, to suit the occupier. The Colonel, who respected his really good teeth too much to smoke inordinately, was keeping his nephew in countenance with a delicate cigarette.

On a silver salver were placed old cognac and iced water, which senior as well as junior would occasionally mingle and sip between their whiffs, carrying on the while the conversation which they had maintained for the last half-hour. It was, indeed, for the purpose of holding this conversation, that Colonel Briarly had invited his nephew to breakfast with him on this particular occasion.

The Colonel availed himself of the opening furnished by the extinction of his second cigarette, to deliver himself more at length than he had hitherto done, pointing at the same

time to a letter from Mrs. Aylesmere which lay open on the table.

"Now, Frank, just let me give you my opinion, as the lawyers say, on the whole case. The particularly respectable head of your family, Mr. Geoffrey Aylesmere, is on his last legs, his very last legs. Having no place in which to lay his head, and no money with which to pay a hotel bill with, he has condescended to take up his abode with his mother, who, after stripping herself of every shilling she can lay hands on, to furnish him with the means of buying brandy, or throwing dice, now proposes to you"—seizing and flourishing aloft Mrs. Aylesmere's letter—"of course, at Mr. Geoffrey's suggestion, to raise money for the use of the said Geoffrey, on the security of the five thousand pounds coming to you at her death, and asks me, her trustee, to connive at that infamous act of self-spoliation."

"Pardon me, uncle," Frank here interposed, "my mother merely intimates"—taking and referring to the letter—"that the transaction will be facilitated by your consenting to it."

"My consent is clearly not necessary to what you call the transaction. The five thousand pounds become yours absolutely at your mother's death; but, of course, a loan will become easier if I consent to be a party to any document you may have to sign. Now, Frank, understand me once for all. If you choose to part with your little inheritance, all you are ever likely to have,"—this very pointedly—"for the purpose of paying some debts of Geoffrey's that won't bear the light of day, you're at liberty to do so; but, my boy, don't look for the least particle of aid from me. Is that plain?"

"Quite plain, uncle; but you overlook the fact that Geoffrey is to insure HIS life for the money I borrow."

"Insure a fiddlestick! How will he keep up the premiums on the policy?"

"I suppose he has some income left. Besides, my mother will see to that."

"Well, Frank, I think you need not speculate on the point, for you may rest assured no respectable Insurance Office will accept the life of such a notorious drunkard as Geoffrey Aylesmere, Esquire, of Lentworth. Who knows how soon we may have to say LATE of Lentworth?"

"My mother seems to think she might herself do something in the way of security," said Frank, looking doubtfully at his uncle.

"Your mother!" growled the Colonel. "Don't talk rubbish! She's fifty next birthday. An insurance on her life would cost goodness knows what, even if her life were insurable, which I doubt. Between ourselves, Frank"—the Colonel's countenance assumed for the moment a less rigid expression—"I don't believe her life is worth a year's purchase."

"Poor mother!" sighed Frank.

"Foolish mother! say rather."

"I know she has been foolish, uncle, and as for Geoffrey I don't pretend to care about him as a brother. He never was much of a brother to me. But yet, you see, I've always loved my mother, and I—I—feel, with you, that her health is sinking——"

"And if it is," the Colonel exclaimed, angrily, "it's under the weight of sorrow and disappointment heaped upon her by the man she spoilt as a boy."

"Rightly or wrongly, uncle, she has set her poor heart on what she calls helping Geoffrey once more and for the last time."

"Fellows of the Geoffrey sort," the Colonel burst forth, violently, and with a gesture intimating that he desired to have done with the subject, "are always asking to be helped for the last time; and the devil of it is, that they generally find good-natured idiots like your mother and yourself to believe in the finality of these appeals. There! Put up your letter, you've had my advice, which, of course, you won't follow. Don't shake your head! I'm as certain that you'll end by letting him have the money as I am that you'll never get a shilling of it back. Now I've done. Give me a light and fill my tumbler, I've talked my throat dry."

After complying with the Colonel's double request, Frank lighted a fresh cigar, and had already made a demonstration of departure when the door bell rang.

"Don't be in a hurry, Frank," the Colonel said, "somebody is coming to call. Stay, and help me to talk."

Frank resumed his seat.

Presently the Colonel's servant, Phibbs, entered, announcing "Mr. Miles Berrington—Mr. Lumley Berrington."

Almost ere the words were out of Phibbs' mouth, the first-named, a dapper, rosy, elaborately dressed little gentleman, apparently about forty years of age, came jauntily in, and advancing quickly to the Colonel, seized with ardour the two fingers which were rather formally extended to him.

"Don't get up, dear boy," he exclaimed. "Glad to see you. Ah, Aylesmere!" turning to Frank, "how are you, dear fellow?" Then he crossed over to the "dear fellow," and taking both his hands, shook them till he almost shook the cigar out of his mouth.

"Didn't Phibbs name your son?" the Colonel asked.

"Of course he did," was the reply, "but you know that old gentleman, my son takes his time about getting up stairs, as about everything else. Ah, here he is at last. Now then, come on, old man."

Hereupon enters, with grave port and solemn mien, Mr. Lumley Berrington.

"Exceedingly happy to see you, Colonel Briarly," he said, slowly. "Your nephew, too. Is not that strange, father? Mr. Francis, I trust you are well. Rather cold for the time of year—so at least I consider it. People who are in the habit of taking violent exercise think differently." After which he placed a pair of heavy gold eye-glasses across his nose, deliberately raised his coat-tails, and placing himself with his back to the fire, silently surveyed the room, and the persons in it.

This father and son, wealthy country bankers retired from business, and now wealthy Middleshire land-owners, the one a widower, the other a bachelor, were a curious pair, whose respective characteristics were significantly set forth in their familiar appellations of Young Old Miles and Old Young Lumley Berrington. The father, who appeared about forty, was, in fact, sixty-eight; the son, who was only in his thirty-second year, might well have passed for double that age. Miles was light-hearted, jovial, quick of thought, eager in action, addicted to pleasure, seeing always the brightest side of things. Lumley was serious, fond of solitude, methodical in his habits, solemn and sententious in manner and speech,

disposed to view life from a gloomy point of view. It was quite natural that, while not wanting in affection for each other, the father should secretly put the son down as a prig, and the son look upon the father as a trifler.

They had only the previous day arrived from Middleshire, whence they had brought all the latest local news; and this their early visit to Colonel Briarly, was made for the purpose of communicating to him a piece of country intelligence which they believed would particularly interest him. Lumley's exclamation of surprise on seeing Frank Aylesmere, had been called forth by the reflection that the intelligence in question possessed even a greater interest for him than for his uncle.

After a few common place remarks, Berrington, senior, who had taken a cigar from the Colonel's box, turned towards Frank, and asked him whether he happened to know where his brother Geoffry was? Frank replied that he was at Boulogne.

"Just the place for him," Miles observed.

Frank added that he had two days since received a letter from his mother, with whom Geoffry was staying.

"That was Friday," said Lumley to his father. "Mr. Aylesmere could not have heard the news by Thursday."

"News! What news?" asked the Colonel.

"Very unpleasant news—though I dare say not unexpected by either of you," Miles hastened to answer preparatorily, and before his son, who had no great regard for the sensibilities of others, could blurt out the naked facts in question. "It's about Lentworth."

Frank turned very pale as he asked, "What about Lentworth?"

"Lumley knows the particulars better than I do," said Miles, satisfied to have paved the way for the very unpleasant news!

Lumley took up the running with, "I had it all direct from Small and Brickwood's office, in Middleford; so, of course, it's quite correct. Well, it's this. Leadstone has foreclosed his mortgage on Lentworth, and the whole thing, lands, woods, mansion, manor, is now his; subject, of course, to Mrs. Aylesmere's annuity, which, by-the-bye, is likely to be paid more regularly than heretofore."

"Leadstone's mortgage!" cried Frank.

"Leadstone, the agent of the estate?" almost at the same moment demanded the Colonel.

"I mean exactly what I say," rejoined Lumley.

"We know of several mortgages," the Colonel said, "but certainly none held by Leadstone."

"Why, my dear Colonel, Leadstone holds them all; or more properly speaking, he is the one and only mortgagee."

"Can this be so, uncle?" asked Frank.

"Yes, Frank," granted the Colonel, "it can. Don't you see the game this precious head of your family has been playing? I do, without another word from Lumley Berrington. For the sake of getting two or three thousand out of Leadstone, Geoffry has allowed him to get all the mortgages into his own hand. So you see Geoffry Aylesmere is a great deal worse than on his last legs. He is already Geoffry Aylesmere LATE of Lentworth. Moreover he has been lying to his mother, and has made her unwittingly lie to you. I suppose now you won't require any caution against raising money for him?"

These concluding words were spoken in a low tone, so as to be unheard by Miles, who, alluding only to that observation of the Colonel which regarded the transactions with Leadstone, said, "Your uncle has hit the right nail on the head, Frank. The thing's well known in the neighbourhood. The whole amount of the mortgage is one hundred and forty-seven thousand pounds. I think quite the outside value of the property."

"So the dear old place is gone from us!" poor Frank almost sobbed out, as he walked to a window to hide his emotion.

"Yes," said Lumley, "and gone where it's likely to remain for two or three generations at least. No chance of it ever being in the market during Thomas Leadstone's lifetime, or any lives that he can cover by act of entail."

"But, Colonel," said Miles, as if struck by a sudden thought, "there may be one chance yet for Frank."

Frank looked vacantly towards the speaker, who went on. "No flattery to say your nephew's a good-looking fellow, and just the right sort to find a weak spot in a woman's heart."

You may, or you may not, know that Leadstone has one only child—a daughter—and that this same daughter is my god-daughter. She must now be about fifteen. Think of that, Master Frank! Old Leadstone's heiress, and owner of the old family estate!"

"I don't even know Leadstone," sighed Frank; "and even if I did, from what I've heard of him, he and his family must be quite impossible people."

"Miles Berrington replied by a gesture of impatience, leaving his son to take up his parable, which he forthwith did with, "Mr. Francis Aylesmere, to qualify anybody having—to name an even sum—fifteen thousand per annum with the epithet impossible, betrays an ignorance of nineteenth century principles such as I certainly should not have expected to find in the occupant of a desk in a public office, toiling for a stipend slightly over what Mr. Leadstone, now of Lentworth, will pay his butler. I see your uncle endorses my sentiments, as does also my father."

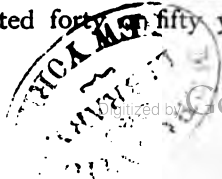
"What sort of a man is Leadstone?" asked the Colonel, of Lumley.

"In manner and language, decidedly below par. In one sense of the word illiterate; but a wonderfully acute and able man in his way. His ability in rural matters positively amounts to genius."

"Is he what people call honest?" asked the Colonel.

"Well," answered Lumley, "he is what some people call honest—that is, he certainly is not dishonest. If you can't appreciate the difference, Colonel, we, who have been brought up to business, can."

"What Lumley means," explained Miles, "is that a man however good-hearted—and Tom Leadstone has a right good, and kind heart—a man, I say, who is always on the watch for good things, which needy people are obliged to part with, can't afford the luxury of generosity or delicacy. I've known Tom all his life; his father, old John Leadstone, who did business with mine, was a miller, one of the very old school; and though he was in a position to leave young Tom, as I remember the present man being called, over thirty thousand pounds, he gave him only the education of a miller—mind you, as millers used to be educated forty or fifty years ago.



After the old man's death Tom gave up milling, and took to farming and land surveying, got agencies to estates valuations, and so on. At one time he boldly speculated in corn to an enormous extent. Perhaps, you'll hardly believe me, but it's a fact, that after clearing sixty thousand pounds, he had the courage to resist the temptation of going on; to invest his profits, and to cut Mark Lane for ever and a day. He farms over five thousand acres, partly his own land, partly hired. Besides managing the Lentworth property, he has occupied seven or eight hundred acres of it as a tenant."

"Is there a Mrs. Leadstone?" the Colonel asked.

"Rather!" was Miles' facetiously emphatic reply. "She was the governess in a rich tradesman's family, and has laid in a wholesale stock of second-hand fine-ladyism, which she plays off liberally against her husband's rough ignorance. My god-child promises to be a wonderful improvement on the parent stock. Very fine girl, highly educated—music—languages—all the boarding school etceteras."

"You may depend upon it," the Colonel said, "they'll aim at marrying her into the aristocracy. No chance for a poor government clerk."

"That is Mrs. Leadstone's fixed idea," Miles observed; "but the result of my observation in such matters is, that the mother's aim is seldom the daughter's, therefore, I again advise Frank to keep a look-out in that quarter."

After this the conversation took another turn, which, not having any particular interest for Frank, he remained absorbed in his own reflections, still under the effect of the intelligence he had just received.

The visit of Berrington *père et fils* was soon cut short by two or three of certain recognised yawns, wherewith the Colonel was wont to give his more intimate friends notice that he would prefer their room to their company. As they were departing, he said, "I've a few friends to dinner next Thursday. If you've no better engagement, will you join them?"

Lumley answered, as he usually did in such cases, for father and self, that they would "be delighted."

"Half-past seven to a moment, you know. Good-day. Excuse my getting up. Frank will ring the bell."

It is worthy of mention that when, half-an-hour later, Frank withdrew, a like prandial invitation was not extended to him. "For," thought the Colonel, the whole tenure of whose life was based upon such calculations, "My dinners cost me fifty shillings a head. These fellows are safe for a couple of first-rate return parties to Blackwall or Greenwich. I can feed Frank any day at the club for a crown."

(To be continued.)





Greece, Constantinople, and Russia.

NOW that the Eastern Question is in abeyance for a season, it may not be a profitless undertaking to consider the claim of Greece to be heir to the Sultanate of Constantinople. Our readers are aware that Greece is a small country in the South of Europe, with between two and three millions of inhabitants, and was, moreover, not many years ago, an appanage of the Ottoman Empire ; and that Constantinople (prior to its capture by the Turks, in 1453) was the chief city, the "New Rome," of the Greco-Roman Empire. A great amount of sentiment has been expended on behalf of Greece on account of her ancient renown, and not as the result of any extraordinary qualities manifested during the modern period of her history.

It would be as well to remember that the Greece of the past and the Greece of modern times are not identical, except territorially—they differ so much in all that is calculated to enhance the reputation of a nation. As Byron said in the early part of this century—

"'Tis Greece, but living Greece no more."

It seems rather unreasonable to demand that Constantinople should revert to the Greeks for the mere reason that they were its antecedent occupants. Both the Eastern and Western Roman Empires have passed out of existence. Why should we set ourselves to reverse the decrees of Providence by attempting to achieve the political resurrection of defunct empires never particularly conducive to the happiness of mankind ? It does not seem in the order of things that dead empires should be resuscitated, or that cities, which for many ages have been in the hands of other peoples, should be relegated to the descendants of their

original occupiers. The Jews are the only people that have a well-founded expectation of being restored to their "old estates," and becoming a great nation on the "mountains of Israel." This is one of the exceptions that prove the rule.

When Constantinople seemed on the eve of falling into the hands of the Russians, England and Europe set their faces against the attempt, and refused therefore to countenance its permanent annexation to the Russian Empire. They also declined to consider the question of transferring the city to Greece against the will of its inhabitants and its rulers, or under any circumstances. The grasping ambition of Russia (known and read of by all independent observers) during the war, made, and will probably hereafter make, Constantinople a "bone of contention" among the Powers of Europe, and she is the Power that expects to profit by the controversy.

A great many of our public speakers and writers have done all that lay in their power to exalt Russia at the expense of England, Turkey, and Europe, and found it convenient to shut their eyes to the enslaving and soul-crushing character of the Russian system of Government, and to the untrustworthy policy of its rulers. In their reckless partisanship they seemed to have forgotten, as they still affect to forget, that to applaud, directly or indirectly, the actions of an aggressive and self-seeking Power, is to become accessory to the committal of a grave crime against the laws of God and man. Solomon says that to "justify the wicked, or to condemn the just," is an "abomination to the Lord." This is just what the Opposition have been doing for the past two or three years, and they are doing it still, with a fatal persistency, in the pursuance of their extraordinary tactics on the Afghan Question.

From our knowledge of Russian opinion, extending over a long series of years, concerning Greece, we know that Russia would not yield the "Czar-grad" of her hopes to that, or to any other Power, save under compulsion. Such an improbable transference does not come within the sphere of "practical politics." Is there any combination of circumstances that would induce any number of nations to assist in carrying out so chimerical a project? It is from Russia that the greatest antagonism to the reconstruction of a new Greek

Byzantium, *under a Greek head*, would arise, and her opposition would only succumb to the *argumentum ad hominem*—"the great battalions."

Russia never has looked with favour on such an eventuality. In 1854 the Emperor Nicholas said that Russia would never permit the re-construction of the Byzantine Empire, nor would she permit Greece, by any material extension of territory, to become a Great Power. He further intimated that Russia would not consent to the transference of Constantinople to any European Power *outside of Russia*.

Of course he looked, as all Russians do, upon that city as a titbit for his own people when the fitting opportunity, the "set time," should come. It may be taken for granted that Russia will not forget the oft-repeated axiom that a great and ambitious power possessing Constantinople, would occupy one of the best positions whence to rule the world, and Europe in particular.

The Empress Catherine little imagined that the *cynosure* of her and her people's hopes and expectations, would still be outside the magic circle of the Czardom in the latter years of the nineteenth century. So long a tarrying was never anticipated by her; yet Russia, confronted though she is by an European Coalition against her acquisition of the Seat of Constantine, is more sanguine than ever that she is on the eve of entering on her long-desired inheritance (the sequel to which would be the absorption of all Greece), and stand up triumphant "like Teneriffe or Atlas un-removed."

Russia will not *even* permit the discussion of the question, whether Greece should be the supercessor of Turkey, nor was it mooted at the recent Congress at Berlin. It is cherished in the bosoms of a few Archaic enthusiasts as a desirable consummation, that is all.

The *consensus* of opinion is moreover not favourable to the Greek character, and the capacity for Government is not a peculiar characteristic of the Greek mind. The apologists of the Greek may have confidence in a Greek Ruler at Constantinople; but would Europe? We are afraid the weakness of Greece would be a constant source of peril, that would either precipitate a collision with Russia, or terminate in the amalgamation of the two Powers, a by no

means improbable contingency in any case. Signs of its possibility have not been absent in their past history.

The tendency of events is certainly not in favour of the pretensions of Greece as an independent Power (even if the Turkish Capital should finally pass out of the hands of Turkey); and the order of things will not yield to theories irreducible to practical action.

If, however, the city is destined to be wrested from the Turk, there is every reason to fear a still more dangerous phase of the Eastern Question. Events are hastening onward to a mighty crisis, a crisis not foreseen in certain political and sectarian coteries, though foreshadowed in the "sure word of prophecy," which it has become the fashion to deride as visionary and unreliable. Nevertheless we may almost anticipate the *dénouement*, prior to which we may possibly find that arch-representative of Greek Christianity, the Czar of "All the Russias," on the Constantinopolitan Throne.

Towards this end he has been gravitating for generations; and even science might venture to predict, from appearances, that the *Russo-glacial* period will not terminate till the "throne of the Cæsars" is occupied by the Russ. At present, however, it seems to be the interest of confederated Europe to retard the process of Russian political gravitation, and allow the "great city" to remain, for a season, with the Ottoman Power. Russia's time has clearly not come yet. The Western Nations, with England as the principal opponent, seem disposed to question the supremacy of the "Northern Colossus;" and with all our commendable anxiety to avoid war therewith, we may eventually find ourselves powerless to do so.

The present aspect of affairs on the borders of India is by no means re-assuring, though we are of opinion that Russia cares more for Turkey and Jerusalem than for our "Indian Empire," though she will assuredly use her Central Asian standpoint to distract our attention from the main issue, and harass our "Imperial interests" either by official or non-official warfare, as the case may require.

The tortuous diplomacy of Russia may yet bring about a catastrophe.

Before the opening of the late war between Russia and Turkey, Europe lost the opportunity to intercept the Russian advance, and all the "blood-and-thunder" of that war followed as a natural sequence. As a Mohammedan would say: "Allah closed the eyes of the nations!" And the result of that judicial blindness is the situation now before our eyes. The view here given is *not* that we should have united with Russia to coerce Turkey, but that we, in common with the other powers, should have forbidden Russia's unwarrantable invasion, and stood in the way of her hypocritical and audacious crusade.

We do not hear so much anent her "blamelessness" now, the recent additional revelations of her duplicity, her broken pledges, and violated engagements, should be enough to change the mind of the most inveterate partisan. Is the Czar's abolition of serfdom to atone for every error of omission or commission? It never seems to have been asked whether the emancipated serfs received even the semblance of either civil or religious liberty.

It may serve the purpose of party to term a persistent reprobation of Russian faithlessness and ambition "fanaticism," and an "accursed thing." Yet woe-betide the day when England shall become the smooth-tongued adulator of the deceiver and oppressor, and the upholder of falsehood and violence. All this she will do if she turn aside from the paths of honour and truth, and become the friend of the spoiler.

Our distrust of Russia is based on actualities, and so long as she walks in the way of the destroyer and the faith-breaker, so long will that distrust continue, yea, till she is "broken in pieces" in the very act of carrying out her "traditional policy."

Reverting to the principal subject of this article (though the observations just made are by no means irrelevant), the plea for a Greek occupancy of Constantinople may serve the purpose of debate, and, as a matter of opinion, may very allowably be discussed; but, as previously remarked, it does not come within the lines of practical politics. Hence, however desirable it may seem to some minds, no European power will be found to advocate it, and the Russian "libe-

rator" is its most irreconcilable opponent. The question must be left among the multitude of amiable speculations not entitled to any serious consideration. A Russo-Greek ascendancy in Europe is one of the possibilities of the future. The prophet Zechariah seems to predict a (Russo)-Greek antagonism to Judah and Israel at the period of their restoration, where he says (chap. ix., 13, 14), "When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O *Greece*, and made thee (Zion) as the sword of a mighty man. And the Lord shall be seen over them, and His arrow shall go forth as the lightning."

Greece alone has shown no special aptitude for the coveted position; she has enough to do to govern her own provinces. She can only become "great" as an integral part of Russia, or some other great power. Be this as it may, a great change must come over the Greek character before Greece can be appointed to wield the "rod of Empire" at Constantinople. But the "throne of the Cæsars" is not vacant yet.

Meanwhile, we have the wisdom of the past and the experience of the present to guide us (and the folly of all ages to guard us against its repetition). If we fail to profit by them the fault will be our own; we shall reap the fruits of our doings whether they be good or bad.

CYRUS.





LOOKING UP ROBINGSON.

A FEW weeks ago I met Robingson in Fleet Street. I had lost sight of him for five or six years. I was delighted to see him, and he seemed pleased to see me ; but he was in a hurry, and so was I. He gave me his address, and said he was doing well. He asked me to "look him up," and held my hand till I said I would.

Robingson lives about twenty miles from London, at Durley, in West Barshire. I made up my mind that I would call on him by surprise, so that he might not make himself stupid with preparations on my account. Accordingly, the other day, I took a ticket for Durley. When I left the train I found I had half-an-hour's walk before me. I discovered Robingson's house, and knocked at the door for about five minutes, and no one came. A window was opened at the next house, and I heard a voice saying, "Mr. Robingson won't be home till six."

It was four o'clock. I would smoke a cigar, and look at the town. I had not a cigar, but I soon found a little shop where I could be satisfied. It was a barber's. I began to think I should like to sit down. I made up my mind that I would kill a little time, and secure a little rest, by being shaved.

I was soon in the chair, at the mercy of the barber, a tall, nervous-looking man.

"Heard what's won the Stakes?" he asked.

I said I had not.

"A stranger here, may be?"

I said I was.

He thought so. They had got up a sweep for the Stakes, and nearly everybody in the town was in it. He had "drawed" the favourite.

The razor moved smoothly over my cheek. Suddenly there was a great noise, as though the roof had fallen in. I started. The barber took an oath of a serious character, and said, "That's Jim."

He did not wait for any remark of mine, but went up some steps in a corner of the room, and disappeared through a hole. Then I heard him struggling in the room above, as though for very life.

I began to think I would run out, but before I could do so his feet appeared on the steps. He came down, opened a cupboard, and took out a pewter pot, which he held to his mouth for about half-a-minute.

"I can't help laughing," he said, "he's such a hass. I lets him that room—well, I needn't say lets, because there's no lets about it. He has it for nothing, because he turns the handle when I wants to use the brush. But he will go to sleep, and three times out o' four he falls out o' the chair, and pretty well frightens me to fits."

I had not time to say anything in return, for a man rushed wildly through the shop, and said, breathlessly, to the barber "Your hoss 's won." Then the man tore away again through the shop. The barber stared wildly at me for an instant, gave me the pewter to hold, put on my hat, and disappeared.

This was too much. What should I do? There was a boy knocking a penny on the counter in the shop, and whistling a tune through his teeth.

"Eh, anybody at home?" I heard him ask; "half-er-hounce er bird-sy."

Of course I could not serve him. I would tell him there was nobody in. I opened the half-door, still holding the pewter as though under a charm, and said, "There's nobody in."

He stared at me for a second, then tried to laugh like a maniac, and went out.

I thought I had better go, and then I thought I had better not, as I was only half shaved, and wanted my hat.

In a few minutes the shop was surrounded by boys, who were pushing each other to get the best place at the door. I had no doubt I was the object of interest, but I could easily step aside so that they could not see me, and wait for the

barber. The boys, however, were not to be disappointed. Two or three of them came through the shop, and grinned at me over the half door.

Then smash went Jim again above, and I jumped half-way across the room with fear and confusion.

"See 'im?" said one of the boys, and they almost shrieked with laughter.

Something must be done. I would set the place on fire, and perish in the flames!

Suddenly there was an alarm, and the boys knocked each other down in trying to get out of the shop. The barber was coming! He entered, flushed with triumph. He danced a breakdown, and then offered to finish shaving me. I said I would finish the job myself, and he said perhaps I'd better as he'd earned enough that day. Then I paid him, secured my own hat, and made my way out of the place.

I began to wish I had not met Robingson in Fleet Street. I would return home by the next train. I would have something to eat first, for I was very hungry. I found a comfortable-looking old inn and entered. I asked the barmaid if they could cook a chop for me, and she said she thought they could; if I would walk into the parlour, she would call me when it was ready.

I walked into the parlour, and saw the spider of the establishment. He looked fat and patient, and was smoking a pipe. I took up a newspaper that I might not enter into conversation, because I did not feel that I wanted to talk. There was a thin, old man sitting by the hearth, and looking steadfastly into the fire. He did not move, the landlord did not speak, and I went on reading.

Presently a severe-looking man came in and asked for some brandy, which was at once handed to him. He also took up a newspaper and read, and all went on "quietly as a marriage bell," or words to that effect.

"I believe half the papers want us to go to war," said the new comer, laying down the paper. "Its madness. I don't want to fight, and I don't think anybody else does. They send us out to fight, and if we're not killed they bring us home again and make us pay for the war."

"You know, Mr. Green," said the landlord, "that I hates

politics, and never talks any of 'em, and don't know anything about 'em. Talk to my friend at the fire. He's death on politics."

"I have not the honour of knowing the gentleman," said Mr. Green; "but I know he will agree with me in one thing—that it is the duty of every man to take an interest in the politics of his country."

The man by the fire made no reply, but slightly moved his head, and wore an aspect of indifference.

"Well," continued Mr. Green, addressing the man by the fire, "perhaps you don't agree with me on that score, but I think you will agree with me that political power is in our own hands, and that we ought to use it. I do my little share; but it is men like you, whose names never appear in the newspapers, who can decide whether you will have peace or war, if you will only use the power you have. Think of the expense and horrors of war, then think of the blessings of peace, and rise in a body and say what you will have. The power is yours, and you can have anything you like."

"The old man's a little deaf," said the landlord. "I'll just wake him up a bit." He went to his friend by the fire, touched him on the shoulder, and shouted in his ear, "Johnny, the gem'n says what will you have—he says you can have anything you like."

"I think I'll have just a little drop of whisky," said Johnny.

The landlord called for a glass of whisky, Scotch.

Mr. Green, frowning, objected strongly to paying for it. He said it was such men who ruined the country. He scorned them and banished them, and went out making some remark about the reek o' th' rotten fens.

"Never mind, Johnny," shouted the landlord, "he ain't got no money. Let him come here again with his politics—I'll politic him."

I was informed that my chop was ready. I went and enjoyed it, and felt in a much better humour. When the repast was over and I had washed myself, I felt really jovial. I would go and look up Robingson after all.

I left the inn, and the first person I met was Robingson! When the greetings were over he said he had just come in by

train, and was going out to a dinner. I must go with him. He would hear of no refusal. The dinner was that of the West Barshire Agricultural Association, and was to be at the Durley Arms. I told him I had dined, but he said that was all stuff and nonsense. He said he was the secretary and could take anybody he liked, and that any friend of his would be welcomed. We should have a jolly evening, and could talk of old days. I pleaded that I was not "dressed," and he said nobody "dressed." They had what was much better—a thoroughly good dinner. He should be really offended if I would not come. He was just going home to have a wash, and that was all. He said I really must go, and at last I said I would. Then he explained that his wife was visiting her mother for a few days, and that he was playing bachelor.

In about half-an-hour we were at the Durley Arms. The chair was taken by the President of the Association, and there was a really good dinner—soups, fish, joints, birds, and as many dainties as an ordinary man could wish for.

"What do you think of it?" asked Robingson.

I said I was enjoying myself, and that the dinner was really very excellent.

"Well, I am very pleased you like it," said Robingson. "As for myself, I like a plain, homely dinner best, after all. These things make me ill. Ah! they're bringing round rice pudding. Now, that's more in my line—that's something I can understand. I must have some of that."

He stopped the waiter, and was served.

"It's ground rice, I expect," said Robingson, looking at the pudding on his plate. He conveyed a spoonful of the pudding to his mouth. He looked at me for a moment, as though he had a fit coming on. Then he suddenly emptied his mouth into his napkin, and indulged in a soliloquy of very severe and sacred objurgations. Then he put his hands to his face, as though suffering from neuralgia, and said, "Good gracious, have mercy on us, my head's coming off." Then he called indignantly after the waiter.

The waiter came.

"What pudding do you call this?" asked Robingson, slowly and severely—"rice pudding?"

"No, sir," said the waiter; "I said hicc-pudding—h-i-c-e."

The somewhat austere waiter went away, and Robingson said to himself, "It must be ground icicles; I shouldn't have thought they could have done it—it leaves a nice flavour too. I'll try it again—a little at a time."

Robingson tried it again, cautiously. Then he dropped the spoon, and said, "No; I'll be —— if I can stand this."

When the waiter came round again, Robingson said, submissively, "This is not bad pudding; but can't you—can't you warm it a bit?"

The waiter considered that he was being "chaffed," and did not deign to reply.

When the good things had all been done with, the President returned thanks in a suitable, small voice. A man at the bottom of the table drank the thanks as a toast, and remarked that the Queen was a good woman. I remembered that the last train would go in twenty minutes, and Robingson said he would go down to the station with me and come back. He asked me to wait just a minute. Then he went whispering round the table, excusing himself, as I thought. He came back to me, and when we left the room all the people stood up, and cheered.

Robingson pushed me out of the door, took my arm, and hurried me away to the station, laughing. He explained to me that he had told them I was the youngest son of Lord Durley, just returned from India, and that I did not wish to be known until I went away. He said they had cheered me for the sake of my father, who, he informed me, was the most popular man in the county. I had never heard of him.

GUY ROSLYN.





A FACE.

BEAUTIFUL ! not of earth's beauty ; that face
Methinks was in Beauty's own paradise cast ;
Had Paris but gazed on such exquisite grace,
The apple would never to Venus have passed.

Fair ! No marble so spotless and pure
Praxiteles even had ever obtained ;
Such for Euploca he sought to procure,
Dimly and daintily crimson-veined.

Bright ! as the angels of Heaven are bright !
A golden ray from the great, white throne
Sheds on the forehead a crystal light,
That shines as the sun of the burning zone.

Two large, love-lit, lustrous eyes,
Set in the shade of a clear, white brow,
Glisten as stars which from wintry skies
With the light of God's love this earth endow.

Sweet red lips of a sweeter mouth !
(Man oft hath sinned for many a less),
Through which the breath of the perfumed south
Comes as a Spirit of Fruitfulness.

Beautiful, perfect, fair, and bright,
A countenance as of the angels that stand
Wrapt in the splendour of Heaven's clear light,
Glorified ever at God's right hand !

HORACE L. NICHOLSON.



MARTINDALE'S MONEY.

A NOVEL.

By the Author of "Old as the Hills," "Kate Savage," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE ARM OF THE LAW.

THE conditions under which Major Munns found himself an involuntary star-gazer were not propitious. It was some little time before he could collect his scattered wits and comprehend what had taken place. Where was he? and what had happened?—were the questions which naturally occurred to his mind as soon as it was capable of entertaining a query. Then, with a groan, he put his hand to his uncovered head. He drew away his fingers with a nervous shudder the next moment, for they were wet—wet and stained with blood. He lay quite still for a while after this discovery; then the instinct of self-preservation reminding him that it was probable death to lie there thus exposed much longer, he made an effort and slowly raised himself upon his elbow.

He evidently need fear nothing more from his assailant. The heath might have swallowed him up for aught that the Major could judge as to which direction he had taken, or what had become of him. The stars shone calmly overhead as if nothing had happened; the heath around him lay still and peaceful as if what had occurred was in the natural march of events. The Major groaned again, now that he was satisfied that he was alone; and then he groaned once more

because he was alone. He was faint and weak, and cold, and his legs trembled beneath him as he crawled to his hat, which lay a little distance off, and then got upon his feet. With a half-dazed manner he drew his coat about his shivering figure, and tried to think where he should go—what he should do. At that moment he caught sight of something large and dark upon the white wilderness around him. It came nearer, at a steady pace, and gradually seemed to assume a clearer outline. There was a thud, thud as of muffled hoofs, and now and then the shrill squeaking of an ungreased axle-tree. Evidently a cart was approaching, and the Major's heart, not in the general way prone to gratitude, was thankful as perhaps it had never been before.

There was a wrapped-up figure in the cart which seemed to be swaying a good deal from side to side. The horse, unchecked by its driver, had strayed off the road and was doing its best to get home by a somewhat roundabout course. At a sort of jog-trot it came now towards the Major, then observing the unexpected object in its path, gave a sudden swerve which nearly shook the man out of the cart, and made him tighten the reins, and steady himself with an inarticulate curse. He was a horse dealer, returning to Hexbury from a festivity at a distant hostelry, and at the moment not altogether drunk, but still not absolutely sober.

"Halloa!" he said, as his gaze took in the figure which had nearly caused a disaster. "Halloa!" he repeated, "what are you up to, my friend?"

The Major made a gesture which at once convinced the man, half muddled though he was, that his presence was not fraught with menace to life or property, and with a jerk of the reins he made the horse come closer.

"Let me get in the cart," said the Major, clinging to its side.

"Eh? what for?" asked the horse dealer, suspiciously.

"I have been attacked and robbed," was the answer. "Can't you see that I have?" he added, in irritable and trembling tones, as the man seemed still reluctant to accept his company."

"How many of them?" asked the dealer, looking round apprehensively.

"Only one ; let me get in."

"Well, then, get in sharp," was the gruff response.

The Major did so with as much alacrity as his bruised and trembling limbs would allow.

"For Heaven's sake drive on, man," he said, with chattering teeth.

For answer the other jerked the reins, and started his horse into a perilous trot across the uneven and deceptive heath. The Major clung to the side of the cart and managed, with difficulty, to keep his seat. Presently, more by luck than care, they got into the beaten track of the road again. Comparative safety being thus attained once more, the faculties of the driver seemed to be steeped in forgetfulness, and the ominous swaying from side to side was resumed. The horse espied the familiar turnpike gate, however, and presently drew up, until the sleepy toll-taker came out and let them through. Again they jogged onward upon the silent road, and once more the Major passed the gaunt, unfinished villas upon the hills on either side. They entered the muffled streets of Hexbury. From one building a bright light shone out across the snow. As he caught sight of it the Major suddenly touched his companion on the sleeve.

"Put me down there, will you?" he said.

"Right you are," was the reply, and the next moment they stopped in front of the police-station.

Whilst the Major was clambering down, a sleepy constable came to the door and looked out. He recognised the driver of the cart, and saluted him.

"What have you got here?" he asked, yawningly.

"Blest if I know. Picked the gentleman up. Says he's been robbed," replied the man, from the cart.

"I *have* been robbed, most shamefully robbed and assaulted on the heath," interposed the Major, with as much dignity as he could assume at the moment, adding, "I want to see the head man here, at once."

At the invitation of the constable he went into the white-washed apartment, and sat down on a bench before the fire, while a sergent was roused from his rest to take the charge.

The Major bared his head before this official, and exhibited the wound which he had sustained.

"Look at this," he said, pathetically.

The sergeant did look at it.

"A nasty cut," he observed. "P'raps it would be just as well as you should see our surgeon." And straightway he commanded his subordinate to "step round" for the unfortunate medical man, who held the appointment of surgeon to the police, and who at that moment was peacefully asleep.

"Now, sir, I'll take the charge," said the sergeant, dipping his pen in the ink with a look of much importance.

"You had better give me a little something—a little brandy first," said the Major, who was looking terribly aged and dishevelled at the moment.

The sergeant produced ardent spirits of some kind from the inner recesses of the premises, and the Major, somewhat revived, stood up with his back to the fire.

"Now, I'll give you the charge," he said, and the sergeant took pen in hand with a business-like air.

"Name and residence, please," he demanded.

Major Munns gave the required particulars, with additional information, as requested.

"Highway robbery with violence," wrote the sergeant, with his scratchy pen. "Description of offender. You don't know who he is, of course?"

"I think I do," replied the Major, with a sort of malignant snarl in his tone, which attracted the other's attention. "Write down Mr. Martindale's lodge-keeper. Gill is his name."

The police officer looked up with a whistle of surprise.

"Write it down, I say," cried Major Munns, in fierce, but quivering tones. Then as if exhausted, he sat once more upon the bench, and was silent until a few minutes later, when the surgeon entered, looking cross and cold.

The Major was accommodated with temporary quarters that night, and the next morning he had an interview with the Superintendent of Police. The Superintendent of Police took him before a magistrate, and the magistrate issued a warrant, and later in the same day Ned Gill found himself an inmate of the police-station.

Then straightway, all sorts of rumours were rife at Hexbury. Groups stood about the streets conversing, with

winks and nods of tremendous import. The new topic did not rob the pending election of any of its claims to interest, but rather increased them, for in some vague and at present undefined manner, people were mixing the two things up together. Everybody asked if everybody else had heard who was in custody for attacking Mr. Martindale's guest upon the heath, and robbing him of a sum in bank notes and various important papers—*very important papers*, said the well-informed, with marked emphasis.

The loquacious hairdresser in the High Street asked his customers if they had heard all about it, and when the customers had departed full of the news, he came to his shop door, and stood on the look-out for new recipients for the latest intelligence. There was mystery afoot, and the more it was handled the more mysterious it became.

In the meantime the examination of the accused before the magistrates was awaited with the greatest interest.

At Hexbury, as in other towns, the police-court provided the morning's amusement for the riff-raff of the community. Hither came blear-eyed, unshorn men, hulking, brutal-looking youths, and a sprinkling of women, whose appearance need not be described. Out from the courts and alleys, and disreputable streets of the town, they came shuffling and dawdling to the entertainment, which was sometimes as good to them as the penny gaff, and perhaps better, for it cost nothing at all. There was always the chance of seeing an old offender, a facetious culprit, and sometimes a maltreated policeman, even if there were none of the superior tragedies which are exemplified weekly in the *Illustrated Police News*. To the habitual frequenters of the Sessions Room, as it was generally called, the narration of a midnight attack and consequent bloodshed upon a lonely heath naturally afforded an attraction which the ordinary programme did not possess. So the usual throng round the doors before the hour at which the magistrates sat to administer Justices' justice was considerably augmented, and showed signs of being less apathetic than when anticipating the ordinary routine of the day. Presently the doors were opened by a stolid-looking constable, who admitted the pressing crowd, with sundry admonitions, such as "Now then ! can't you be'ave there ?" "*Silence in the Court !*"

The disreputable crew packed in the gallery did not constitute the only spectators on this particular occasion. Three or four persons of some local importance had dropped in to hear the case, and were accommodated with seats upon the bench. Amongst these was George Martindale, the Conservative candidate. The occupants of the gallery all knew him, of course, and some whispered comments upon his appearance. His face was not less worn and anxious than when Grace had parted from him in the gathering snowstorm.

The magistrates entered presently, shook hands with Martindale, and took their seats with that air of importance which is peculiar to the Great Unpaid. The justices for the county and the borough magistrates took turns in the occupation of the Court. To-day the former sat, prepared to deal with offences committed beyond the boundaries of the city.

The minor cases came first. A drunken carter, a tramp, who had taken the liberty of sleeping in somebody's barn; a man who was considered to have trespassed in pursuit of game; a boy who had committed wilful damage to the value of one shilling. These were severally fined, or sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour, with the addition of severe admonitions from the bench, especially in the case of the supposed poacher. The chairman kept a little list of set speeches for these occasions, which the reporters for the county papers jotted down with avidity. It was doubtful whether the magisterial remarks interested any one but the justice who uttered them. For the most part, the defendants looked about the Court, winked at an acquaintance, or gazed with apathetic and lack-lustre eyes into the judicial countenance while the little speech was being made.

When these humbler candidates for popular notice had been disposed of, there was a slight stir amongst the expectant audience.

"Put up Edward Gill," said the superintendent of police.

Then the prisoner was led forth from behind a partition, and took his place in the dock, facing the bench.

The magistrates' clerk turned round from his desk, and held a whispered conversation with the justices, during which the gentlemen of the Press eagerly noted down the appearance of the accused, either as that of a "powerfully-built man, of

forbidding aspect," or otherwise, in accordance with the impression which was made upon the individual reporter at the moment.

Then the whispered discussion came to an end, the superintendent commanded silence, the constable at the door echoed the command in lower tones, and the magistrates' clerk stood up and informed the prisoner of the nature of the offence with which he was charged, and admonished him to attend to the evidence which would be given against him.

"Now, the first witness, please," said this gentleman, resuming his seat, and accordingly Major Munns was placed in the box, an object full of interest to the gallery, who eagerly noted his plastered scalp, and were perhaps disappointed that the signs of violence and bloodshed were so limited.

Major Munns gave his history of the affair, from the time of his leaving the club until the time of his being pursued and struck down upon the heath.

"Can you identify the man who attacked you?" asked the magistrate's clerk, when the latter point had been reached.

The witness hesitated a moment.

"Is the prisoner the man?" said the clerk, putting the question in more leading form.

"Yes," said the witness.

"You have no doubt about it?"

"No real doubt."

"Was he dressed as he is now?"

"No; he wore something white over his clothes. A labourer's smock-frock, I believe."

"But you are sure it is the same man; you have had opportunities of observing him before?"

"Frequently."

"At Blatherwick Park, where you say you were visiting?"

"Yes."

"It was a moon-lit night, you say?"

"Yes."

"Were you sufficiently conscious, after the attack, to know the manner in which the prisoner effected the robbery?"

"He only felt in one of my pockets, so far as I can remember. He tore open my coat, and took my leathern pocket-book."

"So far as you know, had he ever seen the pocket-book before, or did he know in what pocket you usually kept it?"

"Not so far as I *know*."

"What did the pocket-book contain?"

"It contained fifty-five pounds in bank notes, of which I do not know the numbers."

"Anything else?"

"Private memoranda, a few letters, and other papers."

At this stage the clerk stood up again and had a whispered consultation with the magistrates. Presently he turned round.

"Have you any reason to believe that any other person was concerned in this robbery, besides the prisoner?"

The Major paused for a moment; his gaze travelled round the court, until it rested upon Martindale with a sort of spiteful intensity which did not pass unnoticed.

"Yes; I have my suspicions," he said, sharply.

"Suspicions are not evidence," said the clerk, with equal sharpness. "Have you anything more which you wish to say to the court?"

"No."

"Now, prisoner," said the Chairman, sternly, "do you wish to ask the witness any questions? Don't make a statement, but ask anything you like upon the evidence which has been given."

There was a stir of anticipation amongst the audience, for, in the general way, as the gilt to the ginger-bread, so was cross-examination to the examination-in-chief.

But disappointment was doomed to fall upon the expectant listeners.

The accused scratched his head thoughtfully, and put one question, and one only.

"Will you swear positively as I'm the man?"

"I will," was the reply.

And that being all, Major Munns was told to stand down, and the next witness, the man who had picked him up on the heath, took his place.

This gentleman's recollection of what had taken place, so far as he was concerned, was so exceedingly hazy that there was a good deal of smothered laughter in the gallery,

and considerable indignation on the bench. Gill asked him nothing at all, and the next witness was the porter at the club, whom the police brought forward with evident gusto.

This man gave his evidence with marked reluctance, and, therefore, with all the more damaging effect as against the prisoner; moreover, his testimony further mystified a case which was already regarded as mysterious; for if it had been the prisoner's object, and only object to secure the harvest of the Major's card-playing, what meant that gentleman's demeanour in the witness-box, and the dark rumours which had somehow crept abroad?

There was also the medical witness, who deposed to having bound up the Major's wounds, and to the belief that the injuries received might have been caused by some blunt instrument—possibly, even, by the prosecutor's head coming in contact with a large stone. Finally, the police-constable who had apprehended the prisoner went into the box, and detailed in the slow and pompous tones peculiar to the force, the circumstances in which he had made the arrest, and that the accused, in answer to the charge, had said nothing at all.

"The missing property," said the constable, "had not been discovered."

Then the Chairman addressed the prisoner in a little speech, which the latter, no doubt, considered to be purely extempore, but which, in reality, was quoted from a printed form upon the desk, to the effect that the prisoner might, at this stage, say anything in answer to the charge, but was not obliged to do so; that what he did say would be given against him on his trial; furthermore, that he had nothing to hope from any promise, and nothing to fear from any threat.

The accused, however, declined to make a statement, or to call any witnesses. Whereupon he was committed for trial at the ensuing assizes to be holden for the county, and was forthwith removed in custody.



CHAPTER XXVI.

WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS.

AFTER the committal of Martindale's lodge-keeper for trial, the ranks of the Liberal party in Hexbury received a new convert in the person of Major Bayford Munns. He took up his quarters at the "Swan," which was the Liberal hotel, and not content with merely lounging about the entrance and looking in at the various committee-rooms, he developed into an active canvasser and advocate in the interests of Mr. Peckham, the Liberal candidate.

At first, the leading supporters of that gentleman looked somewhat coldly on the Major's offers of assistance. But the times were hard, so to say. It was expected by a great many that it would be a neck-and-neck race between the candidates, and in such circumstances no means of assistance could be lightly despised. The suspicions with which many persons so had been disposed to regard the Major's political conversion melted into thin air, however, when it was seen with what zeal he threw himself into the work, and how he laboured with unmistakable earnestness, not to say vindictiveness, to secure the rejection of the candidate whose guest and supporter he had recently been. It was, nevertheless, shrewdly guessed by a good many persons that Major Munns had no strong views upon political matters, that his conduct was to be attributed to personal, rather than to political motives, and that so far as the two great English parties were concerned, it was a matter of supreme indifference to him which managed to be in the ascendant for the time being. Mr. Peckham, who was fretting and fuming under the burdens of the contest which had been forced upon him, did not receive the Major very warmly. He gave him two fingers to shake in the committee-rooms, and hurried out of his reach as soon as it was practicable to do so.

About this time certain squibs and lampoons, of a very disagreeable character, made their appearance amongst the electors. They implied that the Conservative candidate was a receiver of stolen goods, and that he was not entitled to the

position upon the strength of which he had come before the constituency. The charges, of course, were vague, but they were not the less understood by the people on that account. Indeed, the shadowy character of the language resorted to was all the more mischievous by reason of the way in which it tempted the imagination, instead of making an accusation in direct terms.

The matter was so serious that Martindale's leading supporters held a special consultation on the subject, and the result was that a deputation waited upon the leaders on the other side to point out that this kind of thing was beyond the limits of chaff, or of fair and legitimate warfare, and to demand an explanation. The answer received was a repudiation of all responsibility in the matter. Mr. Peckham's central committee had not authorised the publications in question, and, in fact, knew nothing about them. They suggested a reference to the police for assistance, and to the police with anxious brows Mr. Alderman Chadwick, and his friends, betook themselves. The superintendent looked as wise as a superintendent can be expected to look, but beyond this he could not render any material assistance. The Committee decided to offer a reward for such information as should lead to the conviction of the evil-disposed person or persons who had promulgated the libellous imputations in question. The reward was to be a heavy one, payable, ultimately, of course, out of George Martindale's pocket. This sort of thing must be nipped in the bud, the Committee considered; and so the town woke up to find the walls plentifully decorated with huge posters offering five hundred pounds reward for information which, if not obtainable by other means was not likely to be obtained at all. Of course all this was not done without the concurrence of the principal person concerned, but, strange to say, the Committee found him almost apathetic on the subject. He left the whole matter entirely to them—too entirely, in fact, in the opinion of some of his supporters. There was not that degree of indignation at the implied charges which they had perhaps naturally expected. When pressingly informed that something should be done, or that the result of the election would be gravely imperilled, Martindale grew irritable, and

retorted that he had already given them *carte blanche* to do what they liked. Why did not they do it? He seemed so spiritless and indifferent at other times when enthusiasm and vigour were especially needed, that some of his friends pulled long faces and shrugged their shoulders despairingly. This kind of thing would never do. There was a growing feeling of disappointment as to their candidate. Had there been sufficient time, there would probably have been a split in the party, resulting in the introduction of a third candidate into the field. The crisis, however, was now too close at hand to admit of such a course; nevertheless, there were ominous signs of dissension in the camp, which greatly exercised little Alderman Chadwick. He did not venture to say now, "stick to your man," but he went about whispering, "Remember your party, gentlemen, and let there be 'armony." He caused it to be industriously spread abroad that the Conservative candidate was in bad health, a suggestion which Martindale's appearance at this time fully warranted, and that there were also other reasons, of a private character, which prevented his mixing so freely amongst the electors, and addressing them so constantly as they possibly had reason to expect.

To Martindale himself, the Alderman went with despair written upon his countenance.

"This will never do, Mr. Martindale, this will never do, sir," he said, as he entered the library at Blatherwick Park, one afternoon after the Committee had been vainly waiting to see their candidate in Hexbury.

"What will never do, Mr. Chadwick?" asked the candidate, wearily.

"Why—why the whole thing," replied the Alderman, with excitement. "The Committee are asking for you, the people are asking for you, and I am sure I don't know what to tell them."

"Tell them I am ill; I begin to think it is true."

"I have told them so, sir; but that don't satisfy a constituency. A man—that is, a gentleman, who is ill can't expect to win an election, however much other people may try to do it for him."

There was a pathetic tone about the latter part of the sentence which could not pass unnoticed.

"I know, Alderman, that you have been doing all you can, and I am greatly obliged to you," said Martindale, looking at the energetic little gentleman who sat opposite to him, mopping his forehead.

"Don't thank me, sir ; I've got the cause at 'art," said Mr. Chadwick, who, when excited and warm, usually dropped more h's than at other times.

"Such a pity, too," he added, "after the way in which we started. Nothing could have been better than the start, commencing with the *fête* here in your grounds. Everything was going well enough until these infernal lampoons and things got about."

"Surely people don't seriously persist in believing such—such lies," said Martindale, turning paler.

"People will believe anything," said Mr. Chadwick, sententiously.

There was a pause.

"Do you think we have no chance of success?" Martindale asked, presently.

"I don't say that at all," replied the other, "though I own that Peckham has got a firmer hold on the town than I thought he had. But if we are to win we must go in hot and strong, and there mustn't be a stone unturned. We've got a day or two yet, and a good deal can be done even in that time ; but you must come and show yourself. In fact, if I may venture to say it, you had better come back with me, and attend the big meeting this evening."

"I will come," Martindale replied, and a little later the Alderman and he drove into the town together.

In the meanwhile, Ned Gill, who had, to some extent, been the cause of these complications, was languishing in the county gaol. He was a surprised and saddened man—surprised by the prompt collapse of the scheme which had caused him so much laboured thought and anxiety, saddened by the contemplation of the probable consequences. His apprehension and committal for trial had been so rapidly executed that he had had little time in which to realise his position until he found himself within the gloomy portals of the big building, for which a salubrious site had been selected upon one of the hills in the immediate neighbourhood of

Hexbury. He had been shrewd enough, however, to judge from the conduct of Major Munns in the witness-box, that that gentleman believed George Martindale to have been a party to, if not the instigator of, the robbery of the document contained in his leathern pocket-book. Thus much the pensioner knew, or guessed ; but he was, of course, unaware of what was taking place beyond the prison walls. The warders, who were not communicative, gave him no hint of the sort of vengeance which the Major was taking for the deprivation of his gold mine, or of the injury which was being insidiously done to the man whom he (Gill) had, in a half-intelligent way, intended to serve, with the view, of course, of ultimately serving himself.

But alas ! the pleasant fortunes which his limited imagination had built up had crumbled away. He found in himself a victim, as he conceived, of a semi-virtuous act, for in devising the plan of depriving the Major of the document, of the existence and importance of which to his employer he had become aware at the interview near the lodge gates, he had by no means regarded himself in the ugly light in which an unrelenting law chose to look upon him. He had merely desired to deprive the Major of the custody of a piece of paper, to which he had but a doubtful title, without unnecessary force, and, above all, without recognition of himself. An untoward fate had defeated the innocent simplicity of his plans, and had branded him as the wicked perpetrator of robbery with violence.

He had been so hurried into this position that it had scarcely occurred to him to procure legal assistance in his difficulty ; but once within his quiet cell, he had ample time to consider his situation in all its aspects, and, after due reflection, he took an opportunity of asking the deputy governor if he might see a solicitor. This official told him that he might, if he liked, and accordingly a legal gentleman was sent for, and promptly came.

He was a young man who was reported to have his wits about him, a gentleman who carried on a style of practice as different from that pursued by old Mr. Croft in the quiet precincts of the Cathedral, as it could possibly be.

Lawyer and client were locked up together in the small

room which was the scene alike of the chaplain's instructions to the inmates and the criminal's confessions to his adviser.

To the adviser whom he had selected Gill confided that he had saved a little money, and desired to expend some of it, of course as little as possible, upon his defence.

The man of law was immediately spurred with the ambition of making a hole in this nest-egg, and went into the case with zest.

"I suppose you did it?" he asked.

The accused nodded, and the subject was not farther pursued for the moment.

"Can't you get me out of this place?" inquired the client.

The lawyer opined that it was hardly worth while as the Assizes were so close at hand.

"Never mind that; I'd a precious deal rather be out for a little while," persisted Gill.

"I can try to get you admitted to bail, but I doubt if it can be managed," was the answer.

"You try, then, as soon as you can."

"If the magistrates refuse we could go before a judge in London—but all that costs money, you know."

"Never mind the money, that's right enough; you try."

Thus exhorted, the lawyer went his way and did try; at first, without success. The Justices declined to entertain the matter, and were politely informed that an application would be made to one of the Judges of the Superior Court.

The worthy magistrates had heard this sort of thing said by persistent advocates before, and knew that the threat was not always carried out. However, in this instance, Gill's adviser, being satisfied that funds were forthcoming, fulfilled his promise, and to his own surprise and that of a good many other persons, the decision of the magistrates was over-ruled. Two persons were found willing to be responsible for the appearance of the accused to take his trial: one was the keeper of the village shop at Blatherwick, who perhaps thought to please the owner of the park, who was his largest customer; the other was a Hexbury man, who loved notoriety, even when obtained at the risk of having a substantial sum levied upon his lands, tenements, goods, and chattels.

Thus it came about, that in the dusk of an afternoon early in February Gill stepped forth from the gateway of the spacious building which he had not learned to love.

Above him, the half-moon was looking out from a cloudy sky ; below him, the lamps of the town were twinkling in the gloom. He stood for a moment, listening to the hum which came up from the streets. The sights and the sounds were very welcome. The man sniffed the breeze with a pleasure which he had never known before. It was good to breathe the free air once more, though perhaps only for a little while.

He glanced back, after this little pause, at the gloomy walls and towers which frowned behind him, and then, without more delay, put his bundle under his arm, and went at a brisk pace down the hill and into the town. He wandered up and down the streets for a time, unnoticed by the groups and passengers, who seemed to have much more to say and do this evening than was usually the case in Hexbury ; and then, as if forming a sudden determination, he left the town, and made his way in the shadow of the houses towards the heath. He crossed it at a rapid pace, and reached the gates of Blatherwick Park.

It was quite dark now, and he entered without hesitation and went up to the little house, of which he had been the tenant for so many years. The rooms were dark and quiet. He tried the door, it was locked ; he shook the windows, but found they were not to be opened, except by force. He felt aggrieved at this. It was like being deprived of his own property, and for a little while he stood in the small garden uncertain how to act. Then he put down his bundle and went to a tool-house in the corner of the enclosure. He came out with a spade in his hand, and stood listening intently. The result satisfied him. There was no sound, save the mournful sighing of the trees, and now and then the slight crack of a snapping twig. These were familiar to his ear. The road without, and the avenue within the gates gave no sound of footsteps, and, without waiting longer, he crossed the garden to the edge of a flower-bed, and struck his spade into the ground ; then stooping, peered about until he discovered a few stones, lying upon the mould in a particular shape or

outline. Once more he took the spade in hand, and, with quick action, dug to the depth of eighteen or twenty inches. The spade struck upon something tough. Gill then put in his hand, and drew out the Major's pocket-book.

At that moment, there was the sound of carriage wheels upon the road. The vehicle drew up outside, and he heard some one jump down and open the gates. The horses fretted impatiently, and jangled their harness at the delay. In a few seconds they entered the avenue, and the carriage was driven briskly onward to the house.

Whilst this was occurring Gill had shrunk away into a shadowy corner. Now that silence and solitude were restored again he once more resumed operations. He returned stealthily to the tool-house, and there struck a match; by the somewhat insufficient light thus afforded he hastily investigated the contents of the pocket-book. The task was performed with considerable difficulty, for whilst fumbling hurriedly with one hand, he did not notice that the match rapidly consumed itself, and threatened to burn the fingers which held it. He had, therefore, to leave off and strike a fresh light, and this process was repeated several times until he separated from the contents of the pocket-book one blue, official-looking envelope. He did not stop to read either what was written upon or within it—indeed, reading was a difficult task for him; but he felt assured that this, and this only, could be the document which Major Munns had indicated in his unseen presence in the avenue. The rest of the contents consisted of small scraps of paper, letters, and memoranda, and the bank notes, which had changed hands at the Club in Hexbury. These last Gill fastened up again in the pocket-book, thereby exhibiting a self-denial which, doubtless, the criminal classes would have regarded as ludicrously Quixotic. These flimsy, but useful, pieces of paper he buried deep again in the earth from which, they had been temporarily removed, and covered them up and flattened the mould, and sprinkled it with stones, making the place look for all the world so ordinary and innocent that not even the birds of the air could divine the treasures which were sleeping there. Then, his task so far accomplished, he put the spade back in its place, and, having removed all

other possible traces of his visit, set forth up the avenue towards the house.

He slackened his pace doubtfully as he approached, nevertheless he still went on, and presently reached the main entrance, and rang a modest peal at the bell.

So mild, indeed, was the summons that the footman felt sure that the visitor could not be a person of importance, and deputed to a willing and admiring maid the office of answering the door.

"I want to see the guv'nor," said Gill, masking his hesitation with gruffness of tone.

The light from the hall streamed out upon him.

"Oh! good gracious! it is you, Mr. Gill," the young woman exclaimed, with some appearance of dismay.

"Yes, it's me, or what's left of me," Gill responded, with a sickly effort at pleasantry, adding, as he recognised what a failure it was, "Come, I want to see the guv'nor."

"He's not at home," said the young woman, with dignity, for she resented the rough and peremptory tone in which she was addressed, and began to have misgivings as to holding converse with a person who, although presumptively innocent in the eyes of the law up to the present time, was certainly prejudiced in her estimation by what had already taken place at the police-court.

"Why, the carriage came up the avenue just now," Gill retorted, incredulously.

"I am aware of that," said the servant; "but," lapsing into looser grammar, "there wasn't nobody in it."

"Where is he, then?"

"He's in Hexbury," was the reply, "and he won't be back until to-morrow night."

Gill said nothing further, but turned away from the door, and went slowly back to the town.

(To be continued.)





A FISHY TALE.

T'WAS at Greenwich after dinner we sat and sipped the wine,
We were a merry company of say some eight or nine ;
I think that day we'd eaten all and every kind of dish
That could by possibility be made up out of fish,
Which may, perhaps, have been the cause that conversation
followed

A somewhat fishy sort of line—what strange things fishes
swallowed ;

Of what inside them had been found, each told a wondrous
tale,

With many stories stranger far than Jonah and the whale.
We told of how things lost at sea had often been recovered,
And in the entrails of a fish, in time had been discovered,
From saucepan lids to walking-sticks, and Mexican doubloons ;
From silver jugs and pewter mugs, to knives and forks and
spoons,

And scores of empty beer bottles, with every bottle sound,
Especially in Indian seas such things were often found.

At length when we such anecdotes no more to tell were able,
A perfect stranger who had heard us from another table,
Addressed our party in a voice at once both mild and sad :—

“ If you'll permit me, gentlemen, I should be very glad

“ To tell you what occurred to *me* connected with a fish,

“ When I went to America, I'll tell it if you wish.”

The speaker was an oldish man, of fifty I suppose,

Of mild benignant countenance, and spectacles on nose ;

A something in his face bespoke a saddened life of care,

As tho' the shadow of a grief had fixed its story there ;

But yet the lines about his mouth could weave a pleasant
smile,

Subdued and gentle it is true, but genial the while.
Of course we all expressed desire, most cordial and hearty,
To hear the stranger's tale, and asked if he would join our
party.

He bowed with all the ease and grace of a quiet well-bred
man,

And drawing near his chair to us, his story thus began :—

" I've listened with much interest and *curiositie*

" To your strange stories, gentlemen, of fishes in the sea,

" And if my small experience, which I will now relate,

" Should prove to be less wonderful, I'm sure, at any rate,

" You will forgive me, and allow, it is more likely *true*,

" The very plain unvarnished tale that I'll now tell to you :

" Some twenty years ago, when I was in the cotton trade,

" I need not say at Manchester, where I my fortune made—

" Like most young men I fell in love, it matters not to tell

" The lady's name, but if you will, we'll call her Isabel.

" I was not very fortunate at first, but in a while

" The lady took compassion, and consented with a smile.

" We plighted troth, and were engaged—the wedding-day
was fixed,

" And I a little time enjoyed a happiness unmixed.

" However, it was not to be—a week or so before

" The day that should have made us one, and joined us ever-
more,

" I was obliged in haste to leave, on *business* you may guess,

" And post off to America, to my intense distress.

" Affairs beyond my own control kept me, alas, away

" A greatly longer time than I intended there to stay.

" However, when my work was done, I took ship to return

" In haste, because for Isabel I'd never ceased to yearn.

" Now in New York, before I left, I bought a diamond ring—

" A very handsome, costly one—that I had thought to bring

" As wedding gift for Isabel. I should not like to say

" The sum I paid, because I think 'twould take your breath
away.

" Well, just two days from Liverpool, we met an outward
bound,

" And took some newspapers on board, in one of which I
found

"To my dismay that Isabel was married to another—
"To one who'd been my dearest friend, and almost like a
brother.
"Quite mad with mingled grief and rage, I did a foolish
thing,
"For overboard into the sea I flung the diamond ring;
"And in a burst of passion prayed that in the deep it might
"Sink down a hundred thousand miles, out of my maddened
sight.

* * * * *

"A few days afterwards, when we had safely got to port,
"When dining at the 'Ship Hotel,' a largish fish was brought
"To table, which, of course, I ate; but soon I stopped,
because
"I found I bit on something *hard*, and what do you think it
was?
" 'The *ring*! of course, the very ring which overboard you'd
thrown.'
"Well, not exactly so, it was a somewhat large *Fishbone*!"

G. W. MACGEORGE.





CAROLUS MAGNUS; Or, The Sleep of Age.

A ROMANCE OF SCARBOROUGH CASTLE.

By J. C. HODGSON.

ONCE upon a time a young man of distinguished appearance, and clad in a splendid suit of chain-armour, was pursuing his way on a noble steed, through a wild and picturesque tract of country in the North of England. He was one of the knights-errant of the period, wandering hither and thither in search of adventures.

Among the dauntless heroes of that chivalrous age, few were comparable to the high and mighty Carolus Magnus the hero of our story.

He had now reached the sea-coast, and, towering before him, on the summit of a lofty elevation or plateau, appeared a gloomy-looking castle of vast extent. The stranger rode forward, ascending gradually a rough and uneven pathway, till he arrived at the castle gates. He then paused, and turned to survey the scene around. The valley beneath, to a vast extent, was covered with forest scenery, while lofty hills, forming a semi-circle beyond, seemed to pierce the heavens in the distance. To complete the circle of natural beauty, and form a magnificent back ground to the terrible fortalice, the darkling ocean rolled its majestic undulations far beyond the rugged and precipitous cliffs that overhung it. But this portion of the picture was not visible to the eyes of the noble adventurer.

He passed through the gates, which were wide open, and rode up the steep incline of the avenue towards the entrance doors of the castle, on which frowned a huge iron knocker.

The stranger dismounted, and led his noble steed into the inclosure that overlooked the wide ocean. He then advanced to the entrance door and knocked loudly. A hollow sound reverberated fearfully through the echoing building, the dismal clang of armour resounded in the distant chambers, then all was silent as before. Again and again he knocked, till the old castle appeared to shake beneath the awakened uproar. None answered the unusual summons, and all was again still as before.

The door was partly ajar revealing a dark opening. He pushed at the door, when first it creaked sullenly on its rusty hinges, then, as if impelled by a mighty wind, rushed back with precipitation, and stood wide open.

Carolus proceeded fearlessly forward, and, with incredible swiftness, traversed a long and darksome corridor, at the extremity of which, on the left hand, he found a broad and lofty arch-way. He passed underneath, and entered a wide and gloomy hall, with an apparently illimitable range of flooring. The hall was partially illuminated by blazing cressets, so placed as to cast a dingy light over the walls and floor, leaving the distant recesses dark and unapproachable.

A large round table, one hundred feet in diameter, occupied the centre of the hall—a hundred iron chairs were fixed around the table, which was covered with arms and armour.

The walls of the antique apartment were decorated with promiscuous arms and armour, tastefully, yet negligently arranged.

In a large iron arm-chair of antique proportions, his head resting on his mailed hand, and bent forward in a recumbent position towards the table, and apparently buried in profound repose, sat a stranger knight, clad in complete armour, his visor down, the barred helmet glared hideously in the half-lit gloom. All was silent as the grave! Carolus was stricken with momentary amazement, but quickly recovering, he advanced towards the gigantic table, and with the hilt of his sword struck three blows in rapid succession thereon. The echoing sound reverberated dissonantly through the

vast hall. The armour that hung innumerable on the resonant walls was visibly shaken, and rattled again. The dreadful clangour filled the castle, while the iron panoply that incased the seemingly petriferous form of the stranger knight perceptibly shivered, as if moved by some invisible power, and his frowning helmet nodded. But the immovable figure stirred not; its composure was unshaken, and there it sat to all appearance motionless as became the armour in which it was mysteriously enshrouded.

The sudden clang of armed heels on every side of him in the distant recesses of the castle made Carolus half repent of his temerity; he stood for a moment like one entranced, but, gathering up fortitude for the occasion he resumed his self-possession. The sonorous march came nearer and nearer; the strangers were evidently traversing long corridors from various directions, the focus or converging point of which appeared to be the hall in which he stood. Nearer and nearer came the armed heels; but how the approaching strangers were to enter, Carolus found it impossible to conjecture with any certainty. There appeared to be no entrance but the one by which he had himself entered, and no footsteps were heard traversing that corridor. He had not long to wait the issue of his peremptory summons; for suddenly fifty doors were flung wide open, and the mysterious chamber was instantly filled with armed men clothed in complete armour, by whom he found himself surrounded.

With visors down, they stalked swiftly and sternly before him, gazing stedfastly at him all the while, as each took his appointed seat at the table, till the chairs were filled. Behind every occupied chair a mail-clad knight stationed himself, while a hundred warriors more occupied the back ground around.

A dead silence pervaded the hall! They spoke not, moved not, and seemed all of them to have relapsed into a state of insensibility or statue-like repose, while their undiscovered eyes, glaring through the barred helmets, were fixed sternly on the unappalled Carolus. He spoke unto them; they heeded not his voice, and seemed as though they had heard him not.

Wondering what this strange assemblage and their mys-

terious silence could mean, he determined, if possible, to unravel the mystery, and break the magic charm that engirdled them. With this intention he lifted up his gauntleted hand, and struck his massive sword-hilt on the table with greater violence than before. A tremendous rushing was heard as of a thousand flapping wings in rapid flight through the hall, and the sonorous clang of resounding armour again rattled through the shivering dwelling, while the iron figures of the mail-clad knights vibrated with emotion, and each suddenly unsheathing his weapon, brandished it with inconceivable velocity round his head, all looking like enraged demons in the dusky twilight.

But the stranger-knight, who continued to maintain his singularity, remained immovable as heretofore ; and again the automaton-like figures of his companions relapsed into impassibility, in the formidable attitude which they had severally assumed.

Astonished at these singular results, and resolving to bring this unparalleled scene to a conclusion, Carolus once more struck his hilted-sword on the table, when a tumult of noise seven times more appalling enveloped him. The doors that were thrown open on the entrance of the mysterious knights, rushed swiftly back upon their ponderous hinges, and shut with a tremendous clap, while a rushing sound, as of ten thousand javelins hissing through the dim light, simultaneously mingled with the uproar, and the mail-covered surface of the sounding table was suddenly transfixed with innumerable spears, hurled by invisible hands. The knights, as if moved by an uncontrollable impulse, clashed their whirling sabres, while sparks of fire seemed to leap out of their dark-ribbed helmets, and, wheeling sharply round, a tremendous conflict ensued. Smiting right and left, they dealt their sweeping blows with matchless rapidity and precision. What was most extraordinary in this singular conflict, the exasperated combatants struck not each other, but appeared to be engaged with some invisible foe, seen only by themselves, and performed all the terrible evolutions of a hand-to-hand encounter with an armed, and equally matched enemy. But not a sound escaped their lips, arms clashed on arms, and steel on steel, while the noise of rushing wings, whizz of cleaving sabres, the

clatter of armed heels on the hard marble pavement, and the tumultuous rattle of sounding armour, under a continuous shower of rapid strokes, enveloped Carolus in a bewildering hurricane of unspeakable confusion.

In the midst of this incomprehensible scene, Carolus remained an astonished spectator; but resolving to try the potency of another blow, he dealt one so tremendous, that every hand paused—every weapon remained suspended.

Another and another followed, and the armed knights, as if simultaneously moved by a supernatural power, sprang to the edge of the mysterious table, and each lifting up his inverted sabre, struck the iron hilt with great violence thereon; when suddenly the whole building shook as 'neath an earthquake, and a mighty tempest of dissonance rushed through the reeling chamber.

At this terrific crisis the stranger-knight suddenly sprang to his feet—his bursting armour dilating, and wavering, like a sea of molten metal, started from his enshrouded frame, and vanished with a fearful noise, like the blast of a furnace! The massive roof of the hall bent upward on either side, as if thrown back by the resistless arms of a giant. The heaving wall shook, and fell outwards with the crash of an avalanche; a mighty convulsion seemed to walk under the very foundations of the Castle; while a rolling peal of thunder, like the discharge of a thousand pieces of artillery, burst over head, and swept through the trembling ruin.

Carolus leapt on the mysterious round table, that reeled beneath his feet like a barque in a stormy sea, and the devoted fabric around him, involved in wreck and dissolution, with a rattling sound vanished from his sight for ever.

The stranger-knight, so marvellously and suddenly disincumbered of his armour, stamping his foot on the ground, caused the earth beneath him to reel and stagger like a drunken man; and, with a bound springing on the wondrous table, he grasped the extended palm of Carolus with his left hand, while his right was stretched out towards the mail-clad assemblage, who stood immovable like iron statues in grim repose! and lifting up his mighty voice, he exclaimed:—

“Now!” when instantly the armour that encased his imperturbable associates, burst from their colossal frames; the

table sank under the feet of the pair thus unexpectedly brought into contact, and disappeared, and,—“*Long live King Arthur! the glorious King Arthur!*”—broke upon the amazed ear of Carolus, and the metamorphosed knights, each habited in a princely costume, advanced, and surrounded the noble stranger, whose majestic demeanour and lofty bearing invested them with a combined feeling of peculiar awe and admiration in his presence.

The royal stranger still grasped the gauntleted hand of the astonished adventurer, who trembled—not with fear—when he found himself in the presence of that Arthur so famous in the romantic annals of his country.

He bent his knee before the majestic Prince, who, raising him up said:—“Arise, Carolus *Magnus! this night thou hast proved unto me that of all the descendants of King Arthur, *one* yet remaineth, who, by his valour and intrepidity hath shown himself a man after the king’s own heart. By his invincible resolution, under the most dreadful prodigies of terror, to complete the work he had begun, and by his fearless perseverance in the grisly path of adventure, he hath wrought an achievement surpassing all that hath been recorded in history! This night thou hast roused from the voiceless slumber of a thousand years, Arthur and his chivalry. In the midst of ten thousand terrors, and surrounded by innumerable though invisible foes, thy dauntless fortitude, notwithstanding our immutable silence, and the terrible scenes evoked by thy reiterated summons, filled the bosom of the sleeping Arthur with uncontrollable admiration. Tried, thou hast proved thyself equal to the trial! Thou hast shown Arthur, the hero of the times of old, how worthy thou art to cause the wisest, the greatest, and most magnanimous of the kings of the earth, to delight themselves in thee; since patience, resolution, and matchless intrepidity, are the attributes by which thou art so gloriously distinguished. Thou hast won the soul of the generous Arthur. Behold the unequalled results of thy irreproachable conduct! The emancipation of Arthur and his chivalry from the iron bondage in which they were preternaturally engirdled—the dissolution of the castle-prison, which environed them—the dispersion of the invisible multitude that surrounded them—the destruction and dissipa-

tion of the subtle power of enchantment and witchcraft that hung over and enveloped them, and the annihilation of the fatal lethargy which had rendered them, for so many generations, powerless to achieve that deliverance, which, this night, thou hast so happily accomplished !

"Behold ! great and glorious shall be thy career upon earth ! Arthur and his associates, in their secret dwelling-place, will delight themselves in witnessing the achievements of Carolus Magnus, and long shall it be remembered that to thee, in the successful fulfilment of thy destiny, are owing the freedom and resurrection of Arthur and his chivalry !"

He ceased, when suddenly a dense cloud overshadowed them ; a burst of thunder rolled portentously around them, and, in a whirlwind of incredible swiftness, they disappeared from the entranced view of the marvelling Carolus.

* * * * *

The marvellous deeds predicted by the illustrious Arthur of Carolus Magnus, are they not written in the chronicles of romance ? There is, however, one episode in his subsequent career that has not been recorded. The first part of this sequel is but fragmentary, we, nevertheless, present it to our readers as it is ; the second part is explanatory of much that may appear enigmatical in the fragment, and, in the form of an allegory, reveals the consummation of our hero's career, while in the prime of manhood :—

ADAH AND ZILLAH.

A FRAGMENT.

. . . . They beheld him by the ruined tower ; his eyes were bent abstractedly on the ground ; but, lifting them up, as it were, accidentally, he beheld the two sisters gazing at him. They dropt their eyes in confusion, and, turning suddenly on his heel, the stranger passed through the dilapidated gateway, and disappeared in the darkness. Adah and Zillah retired, marvelling at the singularity of their evening adventure, and its equally singular termination.

* * * * *

The evening was calm and beautiful, and again the two

sisters, Adah and Zillah, were strolling, hand-in-hand, near the ruined tower, and again they beheld the mysterious stranger. He was motionless as death ; but, bending his gleaming eyes intelligently upon them, he motioned them towards him. The two sisters, as if moved by an irresistible impulse, obeyed the signal. The stranger took the hand of each, which they did not withdraw ; but, overpowered with an indefinable emotion, suffered themselves to be led into the interior of the building. Arriving at the commencement of a circular or spiral staircase, which descended, as it were, into the bowels of the earth, the stranger paused a moment, and gazed with peculiar earnestness on the fair countenances of his wondering associates, and, smiling, he led them unresistingly down the unilluminated staircase, till they reached the foot, and then proceeding down a dark and lengthy corridor, they entered a spacious hall, gorgeously illuminated, and decorated in a style of more than Oriental magnificence.

The stranger gracefully seated himself on a splendid ottoman, and motioned Adah and Zillah to seat themselves on either side of him ; they silently and unresistingly obeyed, and seemed and felt powerless beneath his will. After which he addressed them in these words :—

THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE TWO LINNETS:

AN ALLEGORY.

“ The birds of the air sang among the branches of the trees all the day, and dispersed their infinite variety of musical utterances around. But when evening had taken possession of the abandoned field, and spread her melancholy veil over the sleeping face of Nature, not a sound broke the soul-subduing stillness ; no nocturnal songster interrupted the lifeless monotony of the scene with his joyous strain in that desolate wilderness. Yet, in the midst thereof, perched on the naked bough of a leafless tree, appeared a solitary nightingale. He was still and impassible as death, his demeanour statuesque and impenetrable, and there he sat, or stood, like a fossilised substance, or the petrified effigy of himself !

“Why was he silent? Why was the songster still? He who should have been filling the air with his soul-stirring harmonies—why was he as a dumb thing that openeth not its mouth? Alas! he had no song in his mouth; his melodious utterances were hid in the secret recesses of his living; silence was his music then; for rather than not sing well he desired not to sing at all—perhaps he was wise too, and silent for wisdom’s sake. None of the birds of the air had noted the solitary nightingale; had they done so, and known that he was that inimitable songster, they might have marvelled at his silence, or past him by, thinking it was not his time, and that he would sing anon.

“At length, as time passed on, he was descried by a linnet, which had come from a far-off spot, and settled in his vicinity—the linnet loved the nightingale, she frequently stole furtive glances at the bird of the mystic plume; and, as the days rolled by, and the stranger-bird did not depart, it might be the indefinable emotion that moved the gentle bosom of the linnet increased in power and intensity, and that his presence excited in her heart a not unwilling interest. Still he seemed distant and unapproachable. Wrapt in himself in the majesty of silence, he seemed hermetically sealed against all extraneous intercourse; he stood afar off, as it were, and appeared an imperturbable specimen of his tribe, and more unsociable than the rest of his species.

“The linnet was a timid bird, and her timidity increased, when, ever and anon, she flew and perched near the stranger-bird, or hopped not far away.

“Not displeased with the movements of the linnet, and unobtrusively knowing the secret cause, he would sometimes venture to bend on her a glance of silent recognition, or chirp an unnoticeable salaam which might have been translated into an invitation of confidence.

“Ere long a second linnet joined company with the first, and the two became inseparable companions, and wondered at the nightingale’s way. They knew not that he was a nightingale, or much would they have marvelled that so far-famed a songster did not treat them to a burst of his own incomparable melody. They did not think him a sparrow, but the bird of the mystic plume, and wondered if he could

sing—if he had the gift of song—the music of a bird ! His appearance harmonised with his taciturnity, for he wore the great coat of his species ; they *might* have thought him a nightingale because of his plumage grey.

“ He saw the desire of the linnets, and mused within himself, should he humble himself and sing though he had lost the gift of song ? Should he speak as a bird might speak though his speech had gone from him ? Should he vocalise his deficiencies and expose them to the linnets ? Should he speak that his fame might die, his *prestige* become extinct ?

“ He suffered himself to be drawn from his bough, he permitted the linnets to triumph, and stood vanquished before them ! Perhaps they were unconscious of their triumph, though he had given the victory to them. He was no longer the bird of the mystic plume—the Lara-like bird of the night, the impersonation of silence. An uncontrollable volubility of utterance became his, much did he sing of himself. The linnets may have thought him an egotistical bird ; his appearance deceived them too, they knew not that he was a nightingale, he looked so much like a sparrow !

“ The apparent incongruity and chaotic harmonies of his strain excited merriment, sorrow, wonder, and love. His broken utterances, his half-musical combinations of song, the indiscriminate vocalisation of his jangled chords, were the *penetralia* in which he dwelt. The linnets could not penetrate this ; he was lost in the darkness of his strain, his secret place was unknown. They played with the bird of the night, the disenchanted bird, and he sent forth an undulating, heterogeneous strain, at once inexplicable and clear, like struggling rays of light, mingled bewilderingly with the wavering filaments of a thick cloud tost about by the wind.

“ Suddenly the scene changed. The noteless plumage of the incomprehensible bird was metamorphosed into one of surpassing beauty, of unparalleled splendour. The dusky coat of the wondrous stranger glittered with the excess of light ! His wings expanded, and became tipped with the effulgence of gold, and irradiant with hues of prismatic brightness, like the o'erarching rainbow of Heaven ! His face

became glorious as the sun, shining in his strength ! His head was encircled with a tiara of coruscations ! His eyes shone like the eyelids of the morning ! and his unrivalled loveliness made him appear like an angel of light in the shape of a bird of resplendent brilliancy, while his awakened voice burst forth, like the rushing of many waters, and the unutterable melodies of his renovated nature filled the mellifluous air around.

"The linnets were speechless with ecstasy, and fell fainting at his feet ; but the dropping sweetness of his inimitable music woke them up again, and made them glad in their hearts."

As the stranger ceased speaking a marvellous transformation occurred. He rose suddenly from the ottoman on which he was seated, as if moved by a preternatural impulse, his countenance became illumined with ineffable splendour that seemed to burst through the veil of his outer humanity, his eyes flashed fire, and became suffused with supernal brilliancy, his whole person dilated beneath an overwhelming afflatus and was clothed with transcendent radiance ; his voice sounded like the rolling waves of the ocean, and his whole demeanour was invested with the majesty and glory of an angelic visitant from the realms of light.

The effect of this celestial vision was instantaneous ; the sisters, veiling their faces with their outspread hands, sank back affrighted by the luminiferous phenomena so suddenly developed before their eyes ; and, falling into a sort of trance, yet having their eyes open, they heard the transfigured stranger say : "I am the nightingale, and you are the linnets ; the prediction is fulfilled ; the hour has arrived, and the metamorphosis described in the allegory is achieved. I am he, whom you knew in days gone by—you drew me out of the privacy in which I had enshrined myself ; you dissipated the impenetrable reserve that had become a part of my nature. I was humbled in your presence, as I had predicted would be the case. I resolved to hide myself from your presence. I left the scene of my humiliation and grief, and disappeared ; and this became the place of my retirement. The sequel you now behold. The weakness of the past is forgotten in the strength and glory of the pre-

sent. The lesser glory has given place to the greater, and now cometh the end."

He had no sooner uttered these words than the dazzling luminosity of the stranger's presence filled the magnificent apartment, and enshrouded the entranced sisters in a resplendent halo, in the midst of which, as in a cloud of celestial fire, they were carried away beyond the region of imagination, and the mysterious stranger and his fair visitants were seen no more for ever.





THE EXCURSIONIST.

WHILST frantic crowds in surging mass,
Pushed, rushed, and swayed, and clamour made,
In boisterous revelrie,
She calmly sat—a buxom lass—
With basket on her knee.

Of all the din she took no heed,
Her rosy cheek did health bespeak,
She seemed on pleasure bent ;
And in her face, 'twas plain to read,
A mind and soul content.

But, look ! Ah, me, how strange is fate,
Now doth she tear her beauteous hair,
And wring her hands, as tho'
At judgment day, she'd found, too late,
Her sentence all was woe.

Aloft she throws those plump, red hands,
With pain distressed she beats her breast,
What makes her bosom heave ?
" Oh, Guard ! I've lost my ticket—and—"
" The train's about to leave !"

JOHN G. GROVE.



FAITHFUL OR FAITHLESS ?

BY R. A. LEA.

CHAPTER VII.

"ONCE A WEEK."



MONTH had passed, four Sundays as I counted, when an event happened which changed the dull monotony of my existence into a Paradise.

At church I was suddenly conscious of Mr. Morris's presence. I had time for reflection, and decided the more dignified, if less grateful, course would be not to recognise him after so many weeks neglect. On leaving I heard my name.

"Miss Graham, you surely arn't going to cut a fellow exile?"

A hand was frankly extended to meet mine.

Blushing, I tried to veil the glad ring in my voice, as I replied to his greeting.

"Where *do* you spring from?"

"From church—but we are stopping the way—let us walk on. Do you go to church every Sunday?"

"I? of course," I responded; "but you don't seem a good church goer."

"You shouldn't judge by appearances, or rather non-appearances. I've been every Sunday."

"No!" I ejaculated, looking incredulous. "Where?"

"In England."

"Dear old England," I repeated—and I sighed.

"Wretched old England, just now. What with East winds

and heavy dinners I am not sorry to find myself well out of it, and once more in dear old Holland."

Chatting pleasantly, we walked along the Malie Baan, until we reached the Freyherrin's house, when raising his hat, and pressing my hand slightly, he said, *A Dimanche* and left me.

We met every Sunday. Sometimes, but rarely, I passed him in the street, generally with some of the students. A bow on his side, a bow and a blush on mine, was the silent interchange of courtesies.

I learned to look forward intensely to our short walk from church. I talked to him of home, aunt, Violet—all that interested me.

He said little of his people, and I fancied he did not get on well with them. How happy I was during those halcyon days, in blissful ignorance of the coming storm.

CHAPTER VIII.

"ACCUSED."

A SUMMONS from the Baroness.

She was sitting in state in the *salon*. From the set of her cap and her dignified demeanour I could see a lecture was impending. I rapidly thought over my shortcomings. My conscience was clear. The worthy lady was evidently ill at ease, so I kindly opened the *séance* by asking,

"Did you want me, madame?"

In more than usually broken English, and choosing her words with difficulty she began,

"Dear young lady. I hear you misconduct you, and make the disappointments with Lord Marquis Seytoun in a way unright in a *demoiselle* of the good family."

I was too astonished to interrupt her flow of words. At

last, I indignantly exclaimed, "You are mistaken, madame, I do not know the gentleman, nor have I ever spoken to him."

"It is unnecessary to tell the lie. Explain, rather."

In vain I denied all knowledge of the Lord Marquis. Suddenly a doubt flashed across me. I turned hot and cold. What if it were Mr. Morris?

"Do you know the Marquis's family name?" I eagerly asked.

Upon hearing it was Glenayr I somewhat prematurely ejaculated, "Thank Heaven; and now, madame, may I ask how this most malicious report originated?"

"My friend, the Lady van Hoogendijke, hat with her own eyes seen you walking with him."

"Impossible," I hastily said.

Relentless as Fate she resumed, "From the holy church he kissed your hand, perhaps you are *fiancée*—bride—eh?"

Seeing me turn white, the kind-hearted little woman gave me her *flacon*. With an effort, I recovered sufficiently to answer,

"I beg your pardon; yes, it is true I have walked back from church with the gentleman, and——"

The baroness looked scandalised.

"And he have kissed your hand. *Ach Himmel!* Miss Graham will you this want of prudence explain. Is it English conduct, and your lie what does it mean. Explain."

"I cannot, madame. Heaven help me! I see how strange my conduct must seem to you. Do not be uneasy—I will leave at once."

I was a fool, an idiot, blinded by vanity and love I had fallen into the snare. The noble Marquis of Seytoun, under a feigned name, was doubtless amusing himself at my expense.

The blood flew to my face, and I must, indeed, have looked guilty as I bowed my farewell to the Baroness, who seemed relieved to be rid of my unwelcome presence.

CHAPTER IX.

"TWO PROPOSALS."

HOME once again. How changed it is. Woodbine Villa and its atmosphere close round me as a prison. Violet was staying with the Conways at St. Leonards. Aunt Anna seemed more commonplace, more fussy than of yore. Was the change with her or with me? I am irritable and sad, and I feel sorry to have left Utrecht without seeing Mr. Morris; perhaps he would have explained his reasons for acting so strangely—surely I was not deceived, he loved me.

I saw in the peerage that Maurice Glenayr, Marquis Seytoun, was the eldest son of the Duke of Iverhaugh. Why was he not a poor man? Alas! what had I to do with such as they—an intruder upon a long line of titled ancestry—I, a shopkeeper's daughter, why even Aunt Anna said she could not get over the plate-glass, and carefully concealed the dreadful fact from our narrow circle. If she thought it a disgrace worth screening by a lie, I could not expect Lord Glenayr and his relations to condone the fact—ah! but if he loved me.

A fortnight passed; the days seemed never ending. I was losing all hope. This morning entering the breakfast-room I saw two letters. Had he written? I seized them joyfully, they were both for my aunt. She opened one, a glad cry of surprise made me look up.

"Dear child! dear child!" aunt said, wiping away a tear. "He has proposed—what a match, Janet! brilliant, everything I could wish for, the dear pet." Again aunt wiped her eyes, and continued, "How thankful I am she refused the curate, although I rather regretted it at the time; how providential, we are but poor short-sighted creatures! We must see to the trousseau, dear; I am glad you are back, your taste is so good. No more tea, dear, joy has taken away my appetite. I'll just put on my bonnet and run in to tell Matilda. Give me the letter—ah! to be sure, I have it."

Aunt put the letter into her pocket, and suddenly, throwing one across to me, exclaimed, "How stupid of me, I quite

forgot to give you this last night—I see, the Utrecht postmark, from the baroness I suppose.”

She closed the door, and I grasped the long-expected letter, and glanced eagerly at the neat small writing which seemed strangely familiar to me. Hurrying into my own room, I locked the door, and slowly opened my first love letter; I looked at the signature, “Maurice Glenayr.” He was true then; he did not deceive me. I burst into happy tears. He loved me—he loved me. The words surged from heart to brain, filling my being. From the lowest depth of despair I rose to clasp a cup overflowing with bliss.

Again and again I read the dear words.

CHAPTER X.

THE DUCHESS.

I WAS disturbed by a loud and imperative knock at the hall-door, and Aunt Anna calling me, I found her on the landing, looking excited.

“My dear,” she announced, importantly, “the Duchess of Iverhaugh wishes to see *you*. Why, what a lovely colour the child has!”

“To see *me*?” I repeated, mechanically.

“What can she want? Is she a friend of Lady Frances, and has she come to congratulate us on dear Violet’s engagement? but then she would have asked for me, not for *you*.”

I was going down stairs when aunt recalled me.

“Janet, stay. How shall you address her?”

“I don’t know, aunt,” I sadly replied. “It doesn’t signify.”

“Not signify,” she echoed, “of course it does. Shall you say ‘your grace’ or ‘duchess.’ Pray don’t be flippant—it’s such bad style.”

“Yes, dear; I’d better not keep her waiting.”

"No, run down, and I'll send in tea. John must take the silver waiter; and oh! she'll want cream. I should say duchesses never drink milk."

"You forget she will have breakfasted long since."

"To be sure," aunt graciously rejoined. "Well, I'll put on my best cap and the Brussels lace shawl, in case her Grace should wish to see me."

Aunt went fussily up stairs as I went sadly down. I dared not pause at the door, lest my courage should give way. I opened it, and stood in the presence of my lover's mother.

The Duchess of Iverhaugh was tall and dignified. She must have been exceedingly handsome, and was still a fine woman, stately, and of good presence. In her somewhat large, well-cut features I traced a look of Maurice.

She was standing, and, as I entered, addressed me in a sweet, penetrating voice.

"Miss Graham, I believe."

I bowed. I could not trust myself to speak.

"You will pardon, and, I hope, understand my intrusion," she continued, in the same well-modulated tone, "when I tell you that only this morning I hear from my son that—that——"

She hesitated. What she had to say was not an easy task. She looked at me.

I would not help her by word or sign. I waited.

"That," she resumed, "he is engaged to Miss Graham. To this engagement he asks our consent. He asks us, the duke and me, to sanction this—this—attachment."

The Duchess waived me morally from her path.

"It is, I presume, needless to inform you that this consent can *never* be given."

I must have turned pale, for pushing a chair slightly towards me, she seated herself on the couch.

"I wish you clearly to understand this. We love him so much," her voice softened. "*You* love him. Think what an immense drawback your affection will be. In marrying you he gives *us* up; thenceforth his life belongs to you and yours. Are these the surroundings you would give him?" The Duchess's cold eyes surveyed my aunt's tawdry drawing-room. "What will become of him—his career blighted, and for

what? A romantic sentiment, perhaps not even a lasting one! Pardon me if I wound you. You do not know him as I do. You think he will be heart-broken and wretched. Listen, Miss Graham, and grant me this one favour. I will not ask you to give him up, I will only ask you not to accept his love rashly. Test his affection—prove him—agree not to see him—not to correspond with him for one short year. Then if he still loves you, accept. Am I asking too great a sacrifice, or do you consent?"

She asked the question very winningly, adding :

"You look bright and happy. Do you think the test a light one? You are young and inexperienced, and love Maurice blindly. He is brilliant, fascinating, warm-hearted, and clever ; impulsive, but unstable as water. Remember, too, that you will have us all against you."

Sighing, and with a heavy heart, I replied, "I must accept your challenge."

"You accept it! It is, indeed a noble resolve, I had almost said sacrifice."

Her joyful tone rung a death-knell to my new-born bliss ; and yet one year, why, even now Time was winging his rapid flight. A year of misery and patient, heart-wearing waiting, crowned by a lifetime of love.

CHAPTER XI.

FLIGHT.



THE wedding-day is to be very soon.

We are going to London to try on the wedding-dress at Madame Morreau's.

Madame "*extasited*" herself at this triumph of art. How lovely Violet looked, radiant with happiness ; how faded my pale face looked beside her.

No news from Maurice ; no answer to my first and last letter.

On our return Violet went to her mother. I paused in the hall; on the table was a scrap of paper, and on it written, "An unrequited pilgrim to the shrine, Maurice Glenayr."

Faithful—not faithless.

I kissed the paper passionately. I loved him all the more that he had disregarded my prayer, and sought to see me before I left England, for I was going to the end of the world, to Australia, to pass my year of probation with my brother Allan. "Shall I see Maurice, or are we parted for ever?"

Before leaving I wrote to the Duchess, begging that news might be sent me, and I enclosed one word for Maurice—"Farewell."

CHAPTER XII.

"MARRIED."

HOW I hated the eternal sameness of my life—*das ewige einerlei*. I took no interest in the new country. I disliked the people—kind, but unpolished. I even thought my brother, and my Cousin George, deteriorated from association with the rough men they called their friends.

I counted the hours. I was yearning for news from Maurice, albeit dreading a letter from the Duchess—her silence was a good sign. The year was waning, I began to take heart, even Allan and George noticed the change in me. I was happier than I had been since leaving all that was dearer than life.

Sometimes I found myself idly wondering if the Duke and Duchess would not be touched by the constancy of the sorely-tried lovers, and if they would not give their blessing to the model pair; and I laughed lightly at the fancy. As the time drew near, in a fever of excitement I made my

preparations for leaving Sydney ; in a few weeks I should start for England—the test accomplished, and my promise redeemed.

I had written to announce my return to Violet and was closing the letter, when Allan passed the verandah, and, seeing me, gaily tossed a paper and a letter on to the table.

“News from the old country,” and whistling he passed on his way.

The letter had a deep black border.

I sat staring at the ducal coronet surmounting the initials.

“Dead,” I murmured. Had I waited, wearing out my youth and my heart for this? Fool, to throw away the happiness I held in my hand. Too late! too late!

Slowly I opened the fatal letter.

Dead! no. Thank heaven—but dead to me. Married! Was it a lie? No. She sent the paper with the account of his marriage to the Lady Blanche Maynard.

* * * * *

I was ill, and for many weeks my life was in danger. Allan nursed me affectionately.

My Cousin George devoted himself to me, and as my health slowly returned, he was always ready to wait upon me, to forestall my every wish.

Alas! if I had a wish—crushed and broken-hearted I live in the past, and mournfully acknowledge the truth the greatest of Italian poets has sadly sung :

“—nella miseria,
Nessun maggior dolor,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice.”

“There is no greater grief in misery
Than the remembrance of happy days.”





DOUBLE ACROSTIC, No. 1.

IN olden French a cry of exultation ;
In English simply an abbreviation.

I.

Poets and lovers deem me sweet,
And Virgil called me damp.
My direst foe I've yet to meet—
The new electric lamp.

II.

I steep the soul in raptures rare,
And banish sorrow, pain and care.

III.

Queen of a distant country she,
And Europe knew her fame ;
Her subjects ne'er could hungry be,
If aught be "in a name."

IV.

'Tis strange, yet clear as noonday sun,
That scores of these oft make but one.

MINNA.



MESOSTICH, No. 1.

GLADLY to greet me all are fain,
Yet oft I bring but grief and pain.

I.

Unequalled in conjunctive force.

II.

Here lives the oddest kind of horse.

III.

Each bleating lamb calls me its mother.

IV.

Good bread, when you have got no other.

V.

A useful tool, a dangerous arm.

VI.

Fear can face me without alarm.

VII.

The proverb says I'm *long*; then why
Do modern swells prefer me *high*?

BRENDA.

VOL. XXXV.

G



Acrostic and Mesostich Rules.

I.—Each number of the *St. James's Magazine* will contain a Double Acrostic and a Mesostich.

II.—In *each* competition Three Annual Prizes, in money (1st prize twenty-five guineas, 2nd prize ten guineas, 3rd prize five guineas), will be awarded to the three most successful solvers.

III.—Special competitions will be held for guessing off ties (if any).

IV.—Prize-winners will be required to furnish their names and addresses for publication.

V.—The same solver may win prizes in both competitions.

VI.—Only *one* word can be accepted as the solution of each light.

VII.—Answers addressed to "The Acrostic Editor," 5, Friar Street, Ludgate Hill, E.C., must be posted in time to be received by the first post on the 10th of each month, or on the 11th, if the 10th falls on a Sunday.

VIII.—In accordance with the wishes of numerous Subscribers, the Acrostics and Mesostiches for March, June, September and December will be in French.



St. James's Magazine.

FEBRUARY, 1879.




WHAT WILL SOCIETY SAY?

A NOVEL.

By MERVYN MERRITON,

Author of "Romances of the Chivalric Ages," "The Ringwoods of Ringwood," &c., &c.

CHAPTER IV.

LTHOUGH the following twelve months were fruitful in events affecting the interests of Frank Aylesmere, a very brief enumeration of those events will suffice for the purposes of our story.

From the moment when Geoffry abandoned his claim to that social respect which hedges round the actual possessor of an old family estate however sunk in the abyss of debt, he became an irredeemably lost man. The few thousands he obtained from Mr. Leadstone rapidly melted away for the benefit of the different European gaming tables then existing, and he returned once more to his mother's house at Boulogne to die of *delirium tremens*, watched till the end by that blindly fond parent. From the shock occasioned by his death she never recovered, and scarcely three months after having followed his brother to the grave in the cemetery at Boulogne, Frank was called upon to perform the same sad office to the remains of the mother he had never ceased to love, though conscious how ill-appreciated was his tenderness.

He had declined, after hearing, as we have seen, the news of the Leadstone foreclosure, to assist Geoffry; but had subsequently drawn voluntarily upon his little patrimony, to

assist his mother, left in straitened circumstances by Geoffry's wicked extravagance. Thus his five thousand pounds became reduced by nearly one half, and the interest on what remained to him scarcely amounted to the sum which his mother had been in the habit of allowing him in addition to his official salary.

If not actually extravagant, Frank was thoughtless in money matters to the verge of extravagance, and was one of those young gentlemen who usually consult their tastes rather than their means. The result was a state of chronic indebtedness on a small scale ; an accommodation bill or two always hanging over him, and a running fight with his creditors, at each returning quarter-day, for possession of the accruing salary or dividend.

In his habits he was somewhat sneeringly designated by his Uncle Briarly as "a peculiar young man, caring little for really good society, though, both by his social antecedents and his official position, entitled to mix with the very best." This, being properly interpreted, meant that, though light of temperament, buoyant of heart, and by no means indisposed to pleasure, he was fond of intellectual pursuits, and was less choice as to the rank occupied in society by his companions than their personal qualities and acquirements. He read much, both in his own language and in French, which was scarcely less familiar to him. He painted landscape in water colours ; in figures he displayed a happy, though refined, spirit of caricature. His voice was mellow and metallic, and he sang agreeably to his own piano accompaniment. But of all life's pleasures that which had the greatest charm for him was the drama. He was thoroughly versed in our English dramatists, from Ben Jonson to Boucicault. He would always prefer a theatre to any other place of amusement ; he was acquainted with many leading actors, and some theatrical critics ; above all he was himself an excellent actor, and one of the most notable members—in fact, to speak technically, "the leading young man"—of the distinguished amateur troupe, known as the "Wandsworth Wanderers," so called because its honorary secretary resided at Wandsworth, not because its performances habitually came off in that suburban locality ; such performances being given,

as is well known, either for the delectation of the members' friends, or in furtherance of charitable purposes, in places of note and great public resort.

It is, to a certain extent, in connection with this Amateur Dramatic Association, that I take up the history of Frank Aylesmere, about a year and three-quarters after his first presentation to the reader on Boulogne Pier.

One afternoon, late in June, Frank returned from the Foreign Office to his lodgings in one of the more important looking streets of Pimlico, socially known as South Belgravia. He had already exchanged his coat and boots for a light jacket and slippers, and had become immersed in a well thumbed copy of *Hamlet*, when a sharp, independent knock was heard at the room-door.

To his "Come in," entered his landlord, Smith by name.

"Sorry to disturb you, Mr. Aylesmere, sir," Smith begins, not looking by any means "sorry," "but this 'ere account of yours 'll 'ave to be settled this week. To-day's Tuesday; I'm a-makin' up my books; Saturday arternoon I gives up the 'ouse to the party as I told you I've made over my lease and good-will to. Twenty-seven, eighteen, ten, rent and book comes to. It's a biggish figure to let a eighteen shilling ground-floor run on to. It isn't every lodger I'd ha' trusted, but I know your position, and though your pay's allus been slow—beggin' your parding for the freedom—it's allus been sure in the long run. When may I calkelate on it, sir?"

Frank took the account tendered by Smith, and without looking at it, though not without a perceptible hesitation of manner, replied: "The day after to-morrow, Mr. Smith."

"Thank ye, sir. You'll see it's made up to Monday next. That day you'll begin accounts with the new party."

"You never told me the new party's name, Mr. Smith."

"Truth is, sir, I've never larnt quite 'ow to pronounce it—and that's a fact."

"I think you said your successor is a foreigner?"

"A Frenchman, sir, just come from Paris, but accustomed to English ways. Well, sir, then I may reckon on my account bein' settled Thursday—will you say Thursday mornin'?"

"Better let it be the afternoon, Mr. Smith. You see I have arrangements to make. At all events, you may depend

on my doing the best I can for you." Here Frank's voice faltered slightly, while Smith ejaculated a doubtful "Ahem!" For conscience told Frank, and experience warned Smith, that Frank's very best might possibly not prove particularly good in Smith's estimation.

Left alone, Frank threw *Hamlet* aside, rose impatiently, and took from his writing case a bundle of documents presenting collectively a very ominous appearance; bills (very few of them paid); dunning letters, memoranda of acceptances, with their dates; stockbrokers' accounts of stock sales.

"I see I must face the thing," he sighed out, "but I'm unequal to the task alone. I'll go up to Heartly."

Abel Heartly was a fellow-lodger, a young painter, occupying two rooms, one of them half studio half sitting-room, on the second floor.

"Ah, old fellow! is it you? Come in!" a cheery voice was heard to exclaim from behind an easel, as Frank, without knocking, entered the painter's room.

"I want you to give me half an hour, Abel," Frank said, seating himself near the easel.

"Ah! something unpleasant, Frank? I think I know what it is. That fellow Smith has been with me; he has been with you too. He wants us to book up. Luckily for me I can; perhaps you can't."

"Oh! I could pay Smith easily enough; but you know I'm in a peck of difficulties. Been going too fast altogether. Look here—and here;" saying which, Frank scattered his ugly bundle of papers at Heartly's feet.

"I'll tell you what it is, Frank," the painter said, laying aside his brush, and collecting Frank's documents; "if this move of Smith's brings you to face your position, he'll have done you a good turn. Now, let me have a look at these. Get into the arm-chair, and be quiet till I ask you a question. Then let me have your answer, sharp and short. I suppose everything you owe is to be found here?"

"You may say fifty pounds for my bootmaker's and tailor's bills—all else is there."

Needless to follow in detail the monetary slough through which, during a good hour, steady-going, plain-speaking Abel Heartly, dragged thoughtless, unpractical Frank Aylesmere.

The financial situation of the latter was in due time thus summed up by the former.

"To begin with the assets, you have sold out, bit by bit, all your stock but—at present price—six hundred and fifty odd pounds. You owe nine hundred and seventy odd pounds. Balance against you, three hundred and twenty odd pounds. If you had enough to pay fifteen shillings in the pound, your creditors might be induced to settle the whole; but you can't. It's useless to offer less. Some of these fellows would report you at the Foreign Office. Some would go to your uncle, which you dread still more. Well, now, supposing you were to offer them ten shillings, and get time to pay the remainder?"

"Let me ask you this question, Abel. How much time shall I require to pay the remainder, and how much money am I likely to lay by out of my Foreign Office salary to pay the remainder with?"

"Humph! I could manage it—I mean, supposing I were in your position—within a couple of years; but I'm afraid you could not."

"Then you must propose something else. Besides, I don't see why you should ask me to sell out the wretched remnant of my stock."

"I would not, if I saw any other way of satisfying your creditors."

"What a fool I am, Abel! There can be no other way—unless——"

"Unless—well?"

"You know, Abel, what I'm thinking of."

"To be sure I do. The question we've so often discussed. Whether it is better, that a clever and accomplished, but poor gentleman, should grind through the best years of his life in a public office, for a salary that a nobleman's groom of the chambers would sneer at, chiefly because the public service has the prestige of gentility; or should turn to a profession for which he has a decided aptitude, holding out a fair prospect of ample remuneration, but which, in spite of its requiring abilities of the very highest order, happens to lie under a stupid social ban."

"Heartily, have you kept Tilson's last letter?" Frank asked, with nervous anxiety.

"Yes ; here it is," was Heartly's reply, as he produced from a drawer a business-like letter. "Shall I read it to you?"

"Do, there's a good fellow."

The communication in question, which Heartly proceeded to read aloud, was from a well-known theatrical agent, and *ci-devant* provincial manager, who, partly from curiosity, partly with professional views, had attended several of the recent performances of the Wandsworth Wanderers. He had seen Frank, under his pseudonyme of Philip Francis, perform only once, when his opinion of him was thus expressed to a professional bystander ; "There's a born actor if ever I saw one. What a pity he's also a born gentleman !"

In these few words Mr. Tilson had summed up at once the verdict of Society against the theatrical profession, and the causes which tend to perpetuate its limitation (save with extremely rare exceptions) to the lower strata of intellect and scholarship.

Confirmed in his first impressions by Frank's subsequent performances, and learning by chance that the young amateur was in pecuniary difficulties, he had suggested to Heartly, who was well known to him, that Mr. Philip Francis might, as a semi-professional (so he sugared over the proposal), easily put money in his purse, if he would place himself in his (Tilson's) hands for some provincial performances.

Frank's pride and prejudice—as Heartly had foreseen—were in arms at the idea. What ! Play for money ! He—a fellow at the Foreign Office—perhaps an embryo ambassador—the son and grandson of—and so on. Had not Society, from time immemorial, placed its veto on the profession of actors ? Tilson might go—never mind where !

Thereout had arisen many of those discussions between Heartly and Frank, by alluding to which the former has just now brought about the production and re-perusal of Tilson's letter.

The object of this epistle, it may be briefly said, was to state that the well known manager of a leading provincial theatre in the North had renewed an offer, already made to and declined by Frank, in terms somewhat modified, and to which he was willing to adhere for fourteen days. He would give Frank twenty pounds per night for three performances

in one week of the several parts indicated. He no longer insisted, as he had hitherto done, on Frank's performing under his "Wandsworth Wanderer" pseudonyme, but left him free to place in the bills any name he might please, or no name at all. A period of fourteen days, for purposes of publicity, was to intervene between Frank's notification of acceptance and his first appearance. No rehearsals were required, beyond such as Frank himself might demand, the parts all being in stock pieces of the company.

"Your expenses for the week ought not to exceed ten pounds," Abel, anxious to improve the occasion, hastened to observe, as he laid down the letter, "so you may bring back fifty pounds; with that you can knock off a good deal——" pointing to the list of debts.

"I think I can get a week's leave of absence—indeed, I'm sure I can," Frank said, closing his eyes, like a man who wants to shut out some unpleasant object. "I stand well with the governor," alluding to his superior in the Department. Of course I shall have to invent a crammer. He'd faint if he knew what I'm after."

"Hang the governor, Frank! I see by your looks you mean to accept, in spite of him and hundreds who think as he does."

"Yes, Abel, I shall accept. I'll write to Tilson at once."

Heartly seized his friend's hand and exclaimed enthusiastically, "Frank, never talk of my pluck again! It doesn't require much pluck in a fellow to work for money, when he's at the same time getting up in the social scale, but it takes a precious deal when he's obliged to go downwards for what he earns!"

Frank shrugged his shoulders in silence, as he sat down to answer Tilson's letter, notifying his acceptance of the Northern manager's proposal.



CHAPTER V.

FRANK'S three performances in the North, having proved successful, beyond Tilson's most sanguine expectations, two more engagements on similar terms were afterwards carried out, and, still later, a fourth, at an increase of five pounds nightly.

Heartly's anticipations as to the clear amount resulting from these performances were not quite realized. Frank was at once of too free-hearted a nature, and too fond of doing things in what he considered "the right style," to arrange his provincial excursions on an economical basis. Still the sum he actually brought home from his four engagements exceeded £170.

"More than you draw from her Majesty's Exchequer, Frank, for a whole year's work," Heartly drily observed.

But the question had, as my reader well knows, a social, as well as a financial aspect, with which Frank must inevitably, sooner or later, be brought face to face.

However discreet were the whispers of Frank's associates and admirers, and however obscurely worded the "It-is-saids" of the theatrical journals, some hints respecting the real object of Frank's short-leave absences, reached the ears of his "Governor," at the Foreign Office. The consequence was that, one morning as Frank entered the office, the hall porter handed him a note from said "Governor" requesting "an immediate interview on an important matter."

Mr. S—— was the incarnation of red-tapeism, somewhat slow of intellect, and steeped to the eyes in prejudice. He was the father of two good-looking marriageable daughters. Frank had visited at his house, and had been voted by those damsels to be "perfectly charming!"

Mr. S—— liked Frank personally; he knew him to be clever, and well born, and it is not improbable that paternal visions of a matrimonial alliance with his young subordinate, had floated through his brain.

It was with a darkened brow that "the Governor," after bidding "Mr. Aylesmere take a chair," began, "You've had a good deal of leave within the last three months."

"I certainly have, Sir, but——"

"Well, never mind—you've had it. Now I don't presume to ask gentlemen under me for an account of themselves out of office hours; but from—ahem!—reports that have reached me, I feel bound to ask you whether it is a fact that you have lately been engaged in giving theatrical performances, in company with—with—ahem!—others than your friends of the Wandsworth Wanderers?"

"It is a fact that I have been so engaged, Sir," Frank promptly replied.

"I suppose then, it has been with, what shall I say?—with a—a view to perfect yourself in the art which you and your friends follow—as I presume to think—follow somewhat too seriously, as an amusement; taking lessons, as it were, from—ahem!—public professors of that art?"

The speaker, disarmed by the young man's frank and unabashed reply, was apparently offering him a sort of loophole by which to escape if he thought fit. But Frank was above accepting the offer, and answered, "No, Sir, I have been performing in a public theatre, with a professional company, for a fixed remuneration.

Mr. S—— started back, as he exclaimed, "Good God!—Aylesmere. Do I hear you rightly?—And you—you don't hesitate to admit the fact as coolly as if it were the most natural occurrence in the world! But, my dear young friend, it's all over—I implore you tell me it's all over! Tranquillize my mind on that point! Say you're not meditating any more of these—these *paid* performances! Give me that assurance on your honour, and I'll overlook the past—I promise you I will."

"You put me on my honour, Sir; therefore, at the risk of forfeiting your good opinion, I must tell you that, with a view to clearing off certain debts which press upon me, I intend to perform again in the manner I have described."

"Have you no other mode of clearing off these debts than that of turning professional actor?"

"None so easy, so rapid, and so pleasant to myself."

"But your uncle—surely he will help you out of your difficulties, rather than see you turn to an occupation on which Society has set its ban? Supposing I were to speak to Colonel Briarly on the subject? I will readily do so in order to serve

you. He well knows the opinion of Society as to the social status of actors."

"I suspect, Sir, Colonel Briarly would be apt to suggest that, if Society troubles itself to the extent you imagine about his nephew, Society may furnish that nephew with the means of avoiding its displeasure."

"My dear Mr. Aylesmere, a man who is in Society cannot fly in its face. Now, that you are in Society—*Cela va sans dire*.—It is assumed that every young man in our office is in Society."

Mr. S—— then closed his eyes, and threw himself back in his chair. He probably expected Frank either to acquiesce in, or differ from, his proposition. Frank, however, having grown weary of the discussion, held his tongue. The consequence was, that Mr. S—— presently, with the air of a man who, having nicely weighed and balanced the pros and cons of a case, sums it up, resumed, "Of course you are aware of the consequences; you see the catastrophe to which you are hurrying! Even now, if I speak out, you have as good as forfeited your place here. No government employé can be allowed to draw money from so impure a source. Persist, Mr. Aylesmere, and you will have to choose—ahem!—between the Foreign Office and the Stage!"

After this antithetical peroration, Mr. S—— paused, and fell back in his chair, as if overpowered by the contemplation of the picture his imagination had drawn.

Frank was slightly nettled by the withering scorn with which the word "Stage" had been accentuated, and replied stiffly, "I thank you, Sir, for the interest you express in my behalf—I have contemplated the contingency of being obliged to choose between the two. There is a good deal to be said in favour of one and of the other. I won't occupy your time with arguments on the question. For the present, I shall, with your permission, stick to the Office—I mean the Office alone,—and I promise you to take no decisive step in the matter without informing you of my decision."

"Very well, Mr. Aylesmere, so be it. I shall keep silent on what I have heard, and what you have told me. But do, for heaven's sake, my dear young friend, reflect on the consequence of your decision! Here you have the hope of following in the steps of Canning, Palmerston, Clarendon! There—"

"Those of Garrick, Kemble, Young!" Frank impulsively filled in, as he rose to go.

"Ah! Young!" exclaimed Mr. S——, taken unawares, "My father knew Young intimately.—THERE was a gentleman indeed,—ahem!" Then feeling conscious of the slip he had made, he hastened to add, "considering he was a member of THAT profession. Good morning, Mr. Aylesmere—good morning. Think well over my remarks, and seriously put the question to yourself—*What will Society Say* if a young man of your social position turns actor?"

* * * * *

For the next three months Frank remained in London, punctual in his attendance in Downing Street; and not only did he think well over what Mr. S—— had said to him, but he was condemned to listen to sundry homilies on the subject of the stage from his uncle, to whom Mr. S—— had, at the house of a common acquaintance, confidentially imparted all that had passed. The Colonel, however, thought fit to substitute a rich wife for the Foreign Office, as the alternative to the stage.

"Were I in your place," Heartly said one day, when Frank referred to the latest of these avuncular homilies, "I should be mainly guided in my respect for the Colonel's opinion by this consideration—what is it likely the old gentleman will do for you hereafter?"

"My uncle's actual means," Frank replied, "are as much a mystery to me as are his future intentions. But one thing is certain. Supposing he now intends to leave me anything, he'll change his mind when he hears I've taken to the stage."

Hereupon Heartly, with a sly look, asked Frank whether he thought there was any chance that the Colonel might be brought to assist him in meeting that disgusting hundred pound bill, held by Bulfus, coming due next—naming the date of maturity, which was in about three weeks time.

Frank made a very wry face, as he answered that there was not the ghost of a chance, and added that, by-the-by, he really must not put off any longer seeing about that bill. Abel knew he had sold a lot of stock, and had very little left to fall back upon—he forgot how much exactly. He must confess, too,

that he had been going a great deal too fast lately. And much more to the same purpose.

In truth since Frank's return from the North, his fatal facility of spending money, had, almost unperceived by himself, though noted with painful interest by his vigilant friend, been resuscitated in full vigour. This was owing to the mere fact of his having money, so easily acquired, to handle. Accordingly, in spite of Heartly's counsels, he had, after settling a few of his most pressing debts, returned pretty much to his usual courses in the matter of finance ; if possible, giving more Richmond and Greenwich dinners, and ordering more coats, waistcoats, boots, and hats than of yore ; the result of which was that, his money-making trips northwards, having, as we know, ceased, there was no resource left but to visit his broker and sell out more stock.

In the mean time, though Frank had never returned to the subject of the choice of a career with Mr. S——, his mind had been much tossed to and fro by the arguments of his friends and well wishers. His yearnings after a theatrical career were disapproved by a large majority of these. Even his comrades of the Wandsworth Wanderers, apart from their regret at the prospect of losing one who was *facile princeps* in their favourite art, being for the most part members of the Upper Ten, faithful to the traditions of their class, condemned the step he meditated, as utterly indefensible, and socially suicidal.

October arrived, and with it his month's vacation, finding him still in a state of indecision. As some country performances of the Wanderers were to come off during the first ten days, he could, he told Heartly, put the matter aside till these performances were over.

Bulfus' hundred-pound bill was met at maturity by the sale of his remaining stock, the proceeds of which it nearly absorbed. He had received all that was due of his official salary, and he found himself owing some four hundred pounds, with less than fifty pounds in his desk. Heartly had bided his time, and now spoke out.

"Frank," he said, when they were, one evening, smoking their cigars in his studio, while he placed his fingers on a sheet of paper covered with calculations, "I have been with Tilson this morning."

"Ah! well?"

"Indeed it IS well, if you choose to see it so—very well—extraordinarily well! Now, you're probably not at all aware of the fact which I'm about to prove to you by the irrefutable logic of arithmetic. It is this. You've been living for the last four months at the rate of—hum!—two thousand, five—no—very nearly seven hundred per annum—Yes that's it. Two thousand seven hundred per annum."

"Oh! Bother your irrefutable logic!—But what then?"

"Well, now for a second fact. Your actual annual income is at present exactly one hundred and——"

"Never mind how much over the hundred. It's too disgusting to dwell upon."

"And I suppose you don't mean to square your expenditure with this hundred and——?"

"No I don't," Frank broke in, sharply, "I don't—simply because its impossible. Do you hear me? Impossible!"

"Then the inference is obvious—you must leave the Foreign Office—am I right?"

"Confound your inferences, Abel! you know I need not decide till my vacation is over."

"My dear Frank, by the time your vacation is over, you'll inevitably have spent all your remaining money, while it's quite possible that this offer"—producing a letter—"may no longer be open to you."

"Ah! an offer? Tilson I see."

"Yes—Tilson. Your old manager, makes you what Tilson calls a splendid offer."

"What is it, Abel?"

"A year's engagement, commencing to-morrow three weeks. You're to be at his disposal for two different northern theatres. You may spend your seven or eight hundred pounds within the twelve months, clear off all your debts, and lay by three or four hundred pounds."

"Really? What a dear good old boy you are, Abel! So you've been doing all this for me, while I've been muddling away money and making an ass of myself. Come along! Don't give me time to hesitate!"—seizing Tilson's letter—"Let me answer him at once!"

"You accept?"

"I do. I've made my choice, for good or evil. This is the turning point of my fortunes. Heaven only knows how it will end!"

"Leave that question to Heaven, Frank. The wisest and the simplest of us can but do that, which, according to the measure of the intellect Heaven has given him, seems the best under existing circumstances."

Having written to Tilson, Frank said he would write to Mr. S—— at the Foreign Office. That would be better, he thought, than seeing him.

It is observable that persons not abounding in moral courage, as a rule, prefer writing, to saying anything likely to be ill-received; forgetting that, while a harsh announcement may be softened by the manner of framing it in speech, even an agreeable one may lose a portion of its attractiveness when drily stated on paper.

"Don't write to Mr. S——," said bold, straightforward Heartly; "see him—though not till you are so fully committed to Tilson as to leave no opportunity for a retreat. He has the prejudices of his class, but he's a kind-hearted man whom you may keep as a friend. You're about to become an artist, and no artist can afford to lose a friend."

Within a week from this day, Frank and Heartly quitted London together for the North. Nor did Heartly return till he had seen his friend fairly launched in the profession he had definitively adopted, with every prospect of what the local press described as an unprecedented success.

CHAPTER VI.

THE conclusion of the year devoted by Frank Aylesmere to the fulfilment of his theatrical engagement—resulting in all the success, be it said, anticipated for him—witnessed a vast change in the appearance and condition of his paternal estate. As a matter of course, in the hands of such a thorough, prac-

tical agriculturalist as the new proprietor, every sort of modern improvement was brought to bear upon the land ; furthermore, Mr. Leadstone almost rebuilt the mansion, having the good taste not to deviate from its original plan and style—that, namely, of the early Georgian era—while the park and grounds were remodelled under an experienced landscape gardener.

It was in the autumn of 186— that the house-warming took place of “the reconstructed edifice,” to use Mrs. Leadstone’s phrase. And here the occasion seems apt for presenting to the reader the said Mrs. Leadstone, as also her husband and their daughter Juliana.

Physically, Mrs. Leadstone may be called a fine woman. She is tall, and, were she a trifle less stiff, might be stately. Her eyes are of a deep, but cold and lustreless black. When she points to her aquiline nose as indicative of an aristocratic descent some generations back—though her father was but a country schoolmaster of the old, old school—the strong similitude of that feature to the beak of a bird of prey, suggests to her hearer rather some remote Hebrew origin. Her mouth is well shaped, but with colourless, uninviting lips. Morally she is haughty and overbearing to her inferiors, mean and subservient to her superiors. Though she makes frequent boast of her self-sacrificing spirit, she is, to the last degree, exacting and selfish. She has retained for her own use an ample store of those airs and graces wherewith she passed her earlier years in lacquering over a succession of pupils. She affects an exuberant sentimentalism ; and it must be admitted that she can, when she considers the occasion fitting, deliver her laboriously fine phrases in choice English and unquestionable grammar.

Ci-devant T. Leadstone, surveyor and land agent, now Thomas Leadstone, of Lentworth Hall, in the county of Middle-shire, Esquire, J.P. and D.L., has been sufficiently described by Miles Berrington in a former chapter. No more need be said of him than that his wife, labour she never so persistently, has as utterly failed to lacquer over his rough manner, and to improve his bad grammar, as she has to harden his kind heart, and falsify the innate truthfulness of his nature. In person he is big and burly. Though nothing approaching to regularity of

outline is to be traced in his features, his countenance beams with geniality and good humour.

Juliana, sole daughter of this house and home, is now nearly seventeen. She is still at Mrs. Belstrode's fashionable school at Kensington; said school receiving a limited number of young ladies, daughters of the nobility and gentry, for the modest sum of three hundred guineas, without extras, annually.

Juliana has come home, by her dear mamma's desire, a fortnight before the commencement of the Christmas holidays, avowedly to be present at the house-warming; in reality, for an object which will shortly be made manifest. She is a tall and strikingly graceful girl, giving promise of full development in form, and much beauty of feature. She is of generous nature and warm heart, somewhat too impulsive and impressionable to please Mrs. Leadstone, and consequently threatens to become repellent of the aforesaid lacquer; which is the more satisfactory to her father, because he perceives, with regret, that her mother's influence over her too plastic nature, in all the ordinary matters of life, is very great, and threatens to become greater. In consequence of this discovery, he has, for some time past, seized every available opportunity, unperceived by his wife, to render Juliana independent and self-asserting. These opportunities, indeed, have not been frequent, since one form in which Mrs. Leadstone's selfishness has ever displayed itself, has been an unreasonable jealousy of her husband as regarded her daughter's affection; and the good man is aware that all attempts on his part to draw Juliana from her mother's society, will have the effect of bringing maternal reproof upon her. Mrs. Leadstone would, in default of better arguments, have defended her conduct herein under the pretext that the dear girl might, if left too much with Mr. Leadstone, fall into his ungrammatical and provincial style of talk. A certain instinctive perception which he himself has of this—to use his own phrase—shuts him up at once on the subject.

And now as regards the Lentworth house-warming.

"I hope Holmes will start in good time for the railway station. You know the express is always punctual in its arrival."

The speaker is Mrs. Leadstone, the person spoken to Mr. Leadstone, the person spoken of the Lentworth Head Coachman.

"I gave partiklar orders, my dear," is the reply.

"Good heavens! L., why can you not say par-ti-cu-lar?"

Mrs. Leadstone, be it observed, when she designates her husband at all, addresses him as "L."

This form of address she thus defends. "Even if my mind willed to designate him by the ignoble baptismal appellation of 'Tom,' I verily believe my lips would refuse to do their office. Then, who but ploughmen's wives call their husbands by those husbands' patronymics? My sole refuge is in the initial L."

She had, however, enjoined her spouse never to repeat that letter after her, or in any way comment upon it; conscious that if, in so doing, he were to commit the blunder, not unfrequent with him, of misplacing the letter "H," the result would be a word usually held inadmissible in polite circles.

Mr. Leadstone, by way of reply to Mrs. Leadstone's query, imitates rather sarcastically her "par-ti-cu-lar."

"Do be careful, L.," she proceeds, "and order Edward to go with the carriage."

Edward is the upper footman, his name is really John; but all Mrs. Leadstone's upper footmen are bound to become Edwards on entering her service. This dignitary is supposed only to take his seat by Holmes when his "missus goes out"; the errand, however, on which the carriage is now bound—that of fetching from the station the Honourable Claude Cotherstone and his friend, Captain Marcus Aubrey, of the Grenadiers—is deemed of sufficient importance for supplementing the Lentworth equipage with the accomplished Edward and his sumptuous calves.

Let the reader, in imagination, enter, on their way to the Dimborough Station, four miles distant, either the closed landau or the open luggage-cart which is to follow it. And now let the reader imagine those four miles traversed, the two vehicles drawn up in front of the station, and the station itself displaying all the bustle attendant upon the arrival of the down express train.

"Ah! you're—aw—aw—from Lentworth?"

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"Yes, sir. Carriage waiting, sir. Cart, too, for luggage."

"All right—aw. Things in THERE." And the Honourable Claude Cotherstone indicated to the obsequious flunkey the compartment, wherein he and his friend—the guard, for the consideration of half-a-crown, aiding—had occupied the whole eight places, now strewn with a profusion of coats, caps, rugs, straps, and cases, for every possible purpose, necessary or needless.

While Edward occupied himself in getting together these various "traps," Captain Aubrey went to look after the weightier impedimenta, Cotherstone lighting a cigar and lounging out towards the carriage. The latter was, in his habits, as *faindant*, helpless, and unbending as the former was energetic, helpful, and unassuming. Men called Claude "bumptious," and Marcus "jolly."

"Nice sort of—aw—cattle you've got there, coachman," Claude drawled out to the solemn and dignified Holmes.

"That they ARE, sir," Holmes said, touching his hat with one finger.

Claude proceeded to look the splendid greys over with the eye of a connoisseur, Holmes taking occasion to inform him that "master" had two more to match them, and that the four occasionally worked together postilion fashion.

"You'll find things done here in first-rate style," was Cotherstone's observation to Aubrey, whose first visit this was to the Leadstones, as the friends started for Lentworth Hall. "It beats me to know where these sort of—aw—new people—aw—get their good form."

Without attempting to unravel that mystery, Marcus said, "I think you told me the Leadstones have bought the property very lately."

"Yes, from the Aylesmeres; good old sort—aw—but went to the dogs, as one sees so many of that sort do. I remember Geoff. Aylesmere—Worked too much in with the Israelites."

"Ah! something in your line, eh Claude?"

"Oh! ay, though there's—aw—this difference between the late Geoff. and the present, Claude. He borrowed—aw—with a deuced bad name, but very good security. I with—aw—a fairish name, and the deuce a bit of security. Nothing, in fact, beyond expectations. But here we are, at the lodge gates."

The usual greetings on arrival concluded, Mrs. Leadstone proposed to the new comers an adjournment to the garden, where, she said, she had a surprise—a pleasant surprise—in store for Mr. Cotherstone.

Claude replied to the effect that the greatest surprise he could meet with, would be to find that there was anything in life capable of surprising him; and then offered his arm to the hostess.

When they reached the flower garden, Mrs. Leadstone advanced alone in the direction of certain female voices, which apparently resounded—across a beautifully-kept lawn—from within a green-house visible at no great distance.

One of these voices fell at once upon Claude's ear with a jarring sound.

"Hanged if she hasn't got my Great Aunt Oglethorpe here!" he whispered to Aubrey. "I acknowledge myself surprised. I wasn't even aware that she knew the Dowager." As he spoke, four ladies came out of the green-house, and advanced to meet Mrs. Leadstone.

"Very pretty indeed!" Aubrey said to his friend; "but surely you described her as fair, rather than dark."

"So she is."

"What, with those superb black eyes?"

"Black eyes! Oh! you're mistaken. I see—aw—That must be some girl staying here. Upon my soul, she is something out of the common! But there's Juliana, with my blessed old aunt." Then aloud to the latter personage, "Really, my dear aunt, this is a surprise!"

"I knew it would be a surprise to you, Claude—I persuaded dear, kind Mrs. Leadstone to keep my visit a secret." Then turning to Juliana, who had been walking by her side, she said, "I believe, my dear, you know my nephew Claude?"

The fact was, that Juliana's acquaintance with "my nephew Claude," was limited to a single meeting with him in London, when at home for the previous Midsummer holidays. While, then, the Dowager occupies herself in endeavouring to place these two young persons on good terms with one another, a few words about herself may not be inapt.

The Dowager—or as the present fashion rules—Joan Lady Oglethorpe, is not particularly well-born, but has owed her

entry into high society to her marriage—an event now dating more than half a century back. She possesses one quality somewhat rare at the present day, among ladies of her habits and age (seventy-four)—namely, that of making no attempt whatever to appear younger than she really is ; for the rouge, which she unsparingly applies to her cheeks, lacking the support of the enamelling process so much in vogue, seems but the more forcibly to throw into relief her crows' feet and wrinkles ; neither is there the slightest chance that her preposterous black wig will ever be thought, even by the dimmest sighted observer, anything but what IT really is.

In fact, concealment of any sort is alien to Lady Oglethorpe's nature, which—in spite of her being altogether of the world, worldly—is singularly frank and open. Her plainness of speech is proverbial, and is indeed dreaded by many of her acquaintance. She has never had any children, but has married off a legion of nieces and great nieces, less by adroit manœuvring than by her tact, knowledge of character, and superb *aplomb*.

It is with an object in view, to be classed under the latter head, that she has managed, during the recent London season, to make the acquaintance of the Leadstones, in Belgrave Square, and to get an invitation to their country house. She has conceived the notion of marrying that high born scapegrace, her grand-nephew, to the heiress of Lentworth ; and having sounded the heiress's mother on the subject, has found ready response to her views. "Quite as a thing of the future, you know, my dear Mrs. Leadstone," she has put it. "Your daughter is now too young ; but there can be no harm in giving them opportunities of seeing one another. Young girls have their fancies, even in short frocks, and who knows, if any other good-looking young fellow comes across her, what ideas might enter her head."

Having placed Juliana under her grand-nephew's charge, the Dowager turned her attention towards the very pretty young lady with the black eyes, in whose direction she had more than once detected Claude in the act of glancing furtively.

"Won't you take a turn with Miss Evershed and me, Mam'selle ?" she asked, with a certain bland loftiness.

"Mam'selle" signed a graceful acquiescence, and was there-upon straightway carried off, flanked on either side by the Dowager and Miss Evershed, in the opposite direction to that taken, as well by Juliana and Claude, as by Mrs. Leadstone and Marcus Aubrey. Miss Evershed, it may be observed, was a spinster of youthful ways, coquettish attire, sentimental character—and uncertain age.

After strolling in a purposeless manner hither and thither, for upwards of an hour, the party of seven returned to the house, where the new-comers were greeted by the Squire both heartily and noisily; heartily, according to his hospitable instincts, noisily, because he could hardly help talking loudly. Both his parents had been deaf during the latter part of their lives, and he had contracted a habit of bawling at those old folks from which he was with difficulty prevented at the present day, even by the significant frowns of his wife.

The term "house-warming," as applied to these Lentworth festivities, was a clear misnomer. Mrs. Leadstone well knew that her husband's social position in the county was not yet recognised, and that any attempt at a gathering on a large scale would probably prove a signal failure; she had, therefore, limited her arrangements to bringing down from London the persons who have been named, and asking a few near neighbours whose countenance might safely be depended upon.

Of the half-dozen dinner *invités*, none deserve particular mention, except our acquaintances the Berringtons, *père et fils*, and a neighbouring curate, the Rev. Bernard St. Ives. This young Cleric, though scarcely five-and-twenty, was already deeply imbued with those notions of sacerdotalism, so ridiculously and offensively pretentious, which, perhaps, are even better calculated than the mere apings of Romanistic observances, to disgust English Protestants with the inroads of what has been facetiously called the Mock-Turtle Church party.

Everybody had been, during several minutes, assembled for dinner, with the exception of Mrs. and Miss Leadstone.

It was the practice of the house that the dinner should be served exactly at seven, without any distinct order to that effect from the drawing-room.

The clock on the chimney-piece struck seven, and still no Mrs. Leadstone—no Juliana.

Mr. Leadstone rose, and glanced nervously at the door, which still remained closed. Lumley Berrington approached him watch in hand. "I thought this clock might be fast," he drawled out, "but I see it's right by the stable clock, and the stable clock's right by my watch. Perhaps Mrs. Leadstone overwalked herself this afternoon?"

"Oh by no manner o' means," said Leadstone; "she'll be down directly."

Here the dinner bell began to sound; while it continued to swing for its allotted minute, there was silence over the room, silence which was somewhat suddenly broken by the sharp throwing open of the door, and the entrance, performed with less sweeping dignity than usual, of Mrs. Leadstone.

Almost at the same moment, the butler, from without the door leading to the dining room, announced, "Dinner, Ma'am!"

The word "Juliana?" pronounced interrogatively by Mr. Leadstone, was answered telegraphically by Mrs. Leadstone, "Don't wait. Won't be down till after dinner!" her manner the while betraying repressed emotion of some sort. Then, recovering herself by a manifest effort, she continued, "Take in Lady Oglethorpe—Mr. Cotherstone, me if you please."

Which, accordingly, Claude had to do, when she had marshalled and sent forward, in somewhat confused order, the remaining guests.

Lady Oglethorpe, who was seldom at any pains to conceal her thoughts, whispered to Leadstone, as they entered the dining room, "I can see that Juliana's not coming down to dinner has upset Mrs. Leadstone; at all events it has upset her table arrangements. Just look! That ridiculous priest has got into Juliana's place by Claude; I wouldn't be in the suckling confessor's shoes; Claude will be disappointed, and out of mere vexation will chaff the poor creature's head off."

"Do him good, my lady," grinned the host, with whom the Cleric was not in good odour.

"But seriously, Mr. Leadstone, I hope your dear girl is not ill."

"Oh, no, no! I should ha' heerd if she was. Just some fancy. Hope you like the soup, my lady?"

"Very much. But I don't like your daughter's fancy for not coming down to dinner." With which the Dowager applied

herself to her *Consommé de Gibier*, raising her head occasionally to knit her bushy brows at the reverend Bernard, all innocent as he was of having obtruded himself into the place by her grand-nephew intended for the heiress of Lentworth.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ladies, on returning to the drawing-room after dinner, found Juliana and "Mam'selle" awaiting them; Juliana's graceful form and charming face, the centre, as it were, of a cloud of white tulle, "Mam'selle" attired in a more womanly dress of delicate, pink silk.

The Dowager ensconced herself on the divan near the heiress. "You're positively a musical enthusiast," she whispered, tapping the young girl's arm with her huge bespangled fan; then, as Juliana opened her eyes enquiringly, adding, "Afraid of tiring yourself by talking at dinner, I suppose, so kept your energies for the piano performance. Ah! I know some among us, would rather have had more of your society and less of your music, good as that is, particularly as you have your handsome French music mistress to take your place when you require it."

"Oh! Lady Oglethorpe, I'm so glad you think her handsome—as to myself I call her lovely."

"Do you, my dear? Well, perhaps she may be too good-looking for her position."

"Not at all, Lady Oglethorpe; anyhow she's a dear creature, and I'm very fond of her. I don't mind telling you, although very likely mamma would rather I held my tongue about it, that my not coming in to dinner was all on account of her."

"Ah!"

"Yes, indeed. You must know mamma made a great point of having her down from London to play with me, while we have friends staying in the house. Wants to show me off a little. Don't shake your head. I'm not so blind as not to see it," with a merry laugh behind her fan. "So I never let

Mrs. Belstrode—my schoolmistress, you know—have any peace, till she promised to arrange for another teacher to take her place at the school during the week she stays here. Well, as I consider her, though she lives by teaching music, just as much a lady as myself—let alone my affection for her—I don't see why she should not dine with us like any other young lady. However, at luncheon yesterday, mamma made some observation, from which I understood that she meant her not to dine with us to-day. I held my tongue, but my mind was made up at once. If she was not to come down to dinner, I would not. It was only when mamma was going up to dress this evening that I told her my determination. Of course she was dreadfully put out, poor dear! Angry at first, but afterwards, seeing I held out, offered to ask her to come down. That I would not hear of for a moment. I said it was too late, and to ask her in this manner would be an insult. The end of it all you saw. Poor mamma had to come down alone."

"My dear girl," said the dowager, "I really did not give you credit for having such a will of your own."

"I don't know about a will of my own," was Juliana's reply, reflectingly given, "but I can't help thinking that my mother very often goes the wrong way to work with me. If ever she gets a little angry, I can't help getting a little obstinate—our Mrs. Belstrode would call it rebellion against constituted authority—and I hold out. Oh! don't look surprised. I do hold out. It's quite the reverse when my mother is kind and tender. I know she loves me dearly, and by gentle means she can do anything with me."

Herein did Juliana lay bare to Joan Lady Oglethorpe, one of the chief secrets of her own moral being. The possession of this secret, only acquired at a later period, was destined to give Mrs. Leadstone a power over her daughter to be exercised with fatal effect upon that daughter's happiness.

When the gentlemen joined the ladies, Juliana and the Dowager were still conversing together, Miss Evershed was engaged with "Mam'selle" at the piano in a discussion upon Mozart and Mendelssohn, Mrs. Leadstone was discussing fancy work with the other ladies.

The prudent Lady Oglethorpe abstained from either look

or gesture calculated to attract her grand-nephew's attention towards Juliana ; firstly, because she perceived at a glance that he had imbibed more wine than was good for him ; secondly, because, from her discovery of a certain shrewdness of perception in Juliana, she felt that the matrimonial scheme in progress would require the most careful and delicate handling. After suffering a few minutes to elapse, she asked Juliana whether she was not going to give her friends some music.

Juliana at once rose, and went to the piano.

"What shall we begin with, Marie dear?" was her question, with a marked accentuation of the last two words, and a somewhat provoking glance at her mother.

A duet was chosen, and played almost as artistically by the pupil as by the teacher.

During the performance both Cotherstone and Aubrey had approached the piano, the first from the consciousness that he had a tendency to fall asleep while seated in an arm-chair, the second through real love of music.

"Charming!" "Delightful!" "Very many thanks!" "Great exertion it must be!" "Allow me to bring you a cup of tea." "Won't you, Miss Leadstone?" "Won't you, Mademoiselle?"

To these phrases, severally uttered by the two young men, the two performers having severally made answer, Juliana, as if suddenly recollecting a duty hitherto left unfulfilled, gracefully indicated her music mistress, as she said to Cotherstone and Aubrey, "Let me introduce my friend, Mademoiselle Marie Duhamel."

No other, in fact, than "*la petite* Duhamel" of our earlier pages, who, during the two years which have elapsed since we parted from her at Boulogne, has risen, in London, to an acknowledged position as a teacher of the piano.

Her age is nineteen, and the epithet "*petite*," probably given to her as a term of endearment, is now certainly inapplicable to her. She is taller even than Juliana, though slighter, and somewhat less finely proportioned. Her features are beautiful, in particular her dark eyes, which have all the fire and passion so absent from Mrs. Leadstone's. Her complexion is of a warm and delicate olive. Her habits of

early independence, the result of her motherless condition, have given her an air of self-possession little in accordance with her youthful appearance ; insomuch that Claude Cotherstone, an experienced reader of female character, in spite of the haze that just now envelopes his faculties, is sensible of a certain awe in her presence, such as has rarely held him in check when speaking with a professional artist of her sex.

While Claude engaged Mdle. Duhamel in conversation, the young guardsman occupied himself with Juliana, whom of the two—all social considerations apart, with regard only to their respective personal attractions—he decidedly preferred.

Meantime the Dowager, although affecting to be amused by the Squire's ponderous and ungrammatical gallantry, was casting, in the direction of the piano, enquiring and not too satisfied glances, while the tenor of her thoughts ran somewhat after this fashion. "I know Claude to be little short of an idiot where handsome women are concerned. On the other hand, when he has any scheme in hand he can be as artful as a fox. Now, is he letting this pretty pianist run away with his heated brain, or is he just pretending admiration for one girl in order to excite the other's jealousy?"

Claude himself was in such a half-muddled state, that probably he could not have answered with any exactitude his aunt's question. At all events, I have it on good authority that when, three or four hours later, after smoking a couple of cigars, and drinking sundry tumblers of brandy and soda water, he bade Aubrey good night, in reply to the latter's proposition, "I say, Claude, old fellow, such a chance as this doesn't fall to many a man," he observed, thickly. "Stunner, isn't she? By George, what wonderful dark eyes!"

"He's thinking of the wrong one!" said Aubrey to himself. "Can it be possible? Upon my word, he's not worthy of the girl, let alone the heiress."

Lady Oglethorpe, whose habits were—for an old lady of fashion—active, was down the next morning by nine o'clock, and lying in wait for her nephew. Her nephew—whose habits were the exact reverse—defeated her purpose, whatever it might be, by not making his appearance till half-past ten, when the breakfast was nearly over. He found Aubrey

sitting by Juliana, or, to speak strictly, Juliana sitting by Aubrey, for it was she who had selected the vacant place by the guardsman, entirely without premeditation, let me add, and simply because it happened that the vacant chair next him was also next her father. The only place remaining unoccupied was one between the two Berringtons, and of this Claude was fain to take possession, offering, as he did so, a fascinating bow apiece to Juliana and Marie. Breakfast concluded, however, he was eagerly pounced upon by Lady Oglethorpe, minded to give him some wholesome advice on the subject uppermost in her thoughts.

"Now, Claude," she commenced, when she had him fast by the button in a corner of the library, "just let us understand one another. I came here solely on your account. Either you mean business, or you don't. Which is it?"

"Business, my lady—decidedly business," he answered, fixing his glass in his eye, and his eye on his aunt.

"Very well," that relative continued didactically, "then let me tell you you've already committed three acts of consummate *bêtise*. You begin by volunteering to bring with you a good-looking, gentlemanly young fellow, certainly your inferior in rank and social prospects—" Claude's elder brother being, though married, yet childless, he (Claude) was heir presumptive to the earldom of Battleborough—"but likely to be richer than you ever can hope to be, even if you come into the title. For number two, you make your appearance in the drawing room, the very first night of your arrival, pretty considerably screwed, as you men say—"

"Come aunt," Claude said, "that's rather strong—fact is I was—aw—fool enough to let old Leadstone lead me on to put—aw—his fine old port on the top of a lot of that excellent Roederer—"

"Lead you on! Stuff! you didn't want much leading on."

"Perhaps not—But I say, aunt, I don't think SHE saw it—Do you?"

"I kept her away from you, or rather, you away from her, as long as I could; however, now for your third blunder. If I'm not very much mistaken, you're ready to get up some sort of a flirtation with that remarkably handsome French girl—Marie—What do they call her?"

"As for that, my Lady, I was quite enough myself, last night, to discover that Marie Duhamel is'nt the woman to let herself be flirted with by the first comer."

"Exactly my opinion, Claude, and I'm very glad you've found it out."

"And as for Aubrey, rest assured he's one of the right sort—my intimate friend—and—aw—knows my views here."

"Pray don't misunderstand me about Marcus Aubrey, he's one of my especial favourites. I believe him to be worthy of all confidence. But suppose for a moment this school-girl—for so she really is—should take a school-girl's fancy to him instead of to you."

"Bah!"

"You flatter yourself you're irresistible. I'm not so blind."

"At all events Marcus leaves the day after to-morrow."

"Glad of it. How long can you stay on this very serious business?"

"Till the end of the week; a little longer if necessary."

"Glad of that too."

After this the conversation took a turn of a financial character, the Dowager having a good deal of money at her disposal, which conversation, as I have no doubt it had greater interest for the Honourable Claude than it is likely to have for the reader, shall not be repeated.

Neither, upon looking over the records, placed at my disposal, on which this veracious history is founded, do I find that the remainder of the Lentworth house-warming gave rise to any incident whatever worthy of notice. I will therefore conclude this chapter with a letter which I find to have been addressed, shortly after the breaking up of the house-party, by Juliana still at home, to Marie Duhamel in London.

"Lentworth Hall, November th, 186—.

"I was charmed, Marie chérie, to hear of your safe arrival at what you term your modest little home. My fancy pictures you flinging yourself, with the ardour that forms the basis of your character, into the arms of that delicious old dear (judging from your description), your step-father; and afterwards, with the staid demeanour which you have adopted as a sort of professional mantle, relating to him the various events

of your *villegiature*. My mother—if she were to see this she would make me write *mamma!*—is lavish in her praises of you; far more so than she was in your presence. I believe ‘the dear Dowager’ thought fit to talk you up; perhaps as a compensation for the black looks she used to award you, when she happened to see her Honourable grand-nephew hovering about you. I need not tell you her ladyship is a sort of oracle with my mother. Even my father, who, to use his own phrase, doesn’t hold much with the big-wigs, respects her good sense and plainness of speech. My mother now admits that, in spite of the fact that you gain your living by teaching, I may with advantage imitate your *maintien*. She praises your dancing, too, though one evening, as I believe I told you, she spoke of your waltzing with Mr. Cotherstone as stiff and unbending. I remember I myself thought you rather stand-off. It seemed to me that his style of waltzing, or something about his manner, was not acceptable to you. And apropos of this Honourable, you can’t think how glad I shall be when his name ceases to be mentioned here. He’s my mother’s pet of pets—far outshining the Reverend Bernard St. Ives. I’m sick of him, with his “aw, —aw,”—and his odious glass stuck in his eye, and his cheek screwed up. How I do hate those glasses! The young men who use them are, I venture to say, nine times out of ten, no more near-sighted than you or I, and have them made (probably from bits of window glass) just as a pretext for staring rudely at our sex. I really think I could not bring myself to marry a man who sticks a glass in his eye! Then, Mr. Cotherstone seems to me not what Mrs. Belstrode calls of a genuine nature. I must say I do like genuine people. Now I take Mr. Aubrey to be a hundred times more genuine than his friend—more natural and unaffected, too, in his manner; though I never venture to say anything in HIS praise, because I see he is not in the ascendant here. Please don’t forget when next you go to Kensington—Wednesday, I suppose—to give my very best love and kisses to ——— and to ———; and kind regards—remember ONLY kind regards to ———. Never mind any of the others. Between ourselves I care no more about them than they do about me. I’m afraid it’s undutiful in me, but I cannot fancy those very great people of whom my mother is so fond, only because they ARE great. Probably it’s on account of the

old Miller blood that runs in my veins, blood which my-mother utterly ignores. I must tell you that I've already secured an invitation for you and yqur step-father at Christmas. Mind you accept it. N.B. Mr. Cotherstone will NOT be here! He joins some "family circle" at some grand house of which I forget the name. Here I must conclude, as I'm wanted for a drive, which I would willingly escape in order to give you some more of my nonsense. Adieu then, Amie chérie. Write au plus tôt to
Your affectionate

JULIANA."

(To be continued.)

SO SWEETLY SMILED SHE.

So sweetly smiled she when we met,
The thought of it doth thrill me yet ;
Nor can I e'er through life forget
Her first shy look of love.

'Twas when we sauntered by the brook
At eventide, her hand I took ;
She whispering spake, with blushing look,
Her first sweet word of love.

When we were 'neath the hawthorn tree,
She vowed that she my wife would be,
And sealed her troth, and gave to me
Her first fond kiss of love.

With kindly look, and word, and kiss,
She makes me rich in happiness ;
And now we spend in wedded bliss
Our one long life of love.

JOHN KNOWLES ROWBOTHAM.



OUR MODERN POETS.

NO. XV.—WILLIAM W. STORY.

IT is pleasing to find, in a writer of undoubted originality and strength, the influence of a master who has been studied and appreciated without being directly imitated or travestied. It is a compliment to Mr. Browning that a poet like Mr. Story should have admired and used his method; and it is creditable to the younger writer to have known so thoroughly without falling back upon mere tricks of phrase and rhetorical juggling. There cannot be a doubt about Mr. Story's originality and excellence, any more than there can be in reference to the fact that he has learned, to real profit, of Mr. Browning. Even as an exercise in poetics, it would be excellent practice to see what one could accomplish in the wake of "Sordello," or "The Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau;" and it is just possible that there are parodists living who could produce meritorious results of that kind without feeling they had achieved a literary feat. But that would not count for much. Nobody, for example, would think of dignifying with the title of poetry such specimens as those—one of them an imitation of "Sordello"—in the late Mr. Bayard Taylor's "Diversions of the Echo Club," first, because the author himself had no serious intention in framing them; and secondly, because they lack the essential qualities of original verse. Yet even a parody—as Bon Gaultier's on "Locksley Hall," or Shirley Brookes's on "The Ancient Mariner"—may have outlook and individuality enough to stamp its author not only with courage, but with originality. It may be, like the "Rejected Addresses" and several of Hood's best whims, a real and lasting contribution to literature. Higher than all that, however, is Mr. Story's work, when

under the influence of Mr. Browning, to say nothing just yet of what he is capable of when directly expressing himself. Sometimes, the relationship of the two poets is like that between Phineas Fletcher and Spenser; oftenest, Mr. Story stands to his master as Christopher North does to Wordsworth—that is, there is something in the tone not to be mistaken, while the sentiment and the illustrative material are equally underived. In a word, the author of “Graffiti d’Italia” and “Nero” has frequently found it convenient to adopt some of Mr. Browning’s forms by way of giving poetical setting to his own thought, and English literature is so much the richer for the process. Were it needful to show that Mr. Story is able to express himself under different conditions, there is ample material for the purpose in what he has written himself, and *a priori* evidence of the same may readily be found in a discriminating study of the poems that mark resemblance.

The dramatic monologue, as with Mr. Browning, is a special favourite with Mr. Story. For psychological purposes, even in a narrative, this form has many advantages. It clothes the supposed speaker with a personality that gives directness and piquancy of interest; it invites the reader to share in a discussion that otherwise would be a close secret for him; it admits of detail and familiar colloquial terms that brace up the attention; and it implies warm subjective appeal, and even exuberance of passion, for which the author need not hold himself responsible. As a study of individual moods and experience, a poem composed in the form of monologue sets forth the theme rather than the author and his art, and it is only on further examination that these can be considered as they deserve. Perfect drama surpasses it, in this respect, only because of its diverse characterisation and manifold subtle involutions. A writer of dramatic knowledge is not necessarily capable of working out the elaborate variations of a drama, while a dramatist is more likely (though not absolutely certain) to succeed with the analytic process of the monologue. Mr. Browning and Mr. Story excel in both kinds, but Mr. Story’s real strength is better seen in the monologue than the drama.

The volume entitled “Graffiti d’Italia” contains in itself

quite a series of poetical studies. There are three great divisions of the work, entitled respectively, "Mediæval," "Antique," and "Modern," the included poems referring to Italy under these three aspects. Six "Scherzi" form a graceful appendix to this threefold tribute to the sunny southern land. It may be worth while, before entering upon a more detailed consideration of the poems, to note one or two instances of the apparent influence of Mr. Browning. The following is the conclusion of a speech, meant to ridicule the Christian miracles, delivered by Lucius, a rationalist, in the stately poem "A Primitive Christian in Rome." The colloquialisms, the echoes of the smart things uttered in the market-place, the undercurrent of grave humour, will instantly speak for themselves to readers acquainted with both poets :—

" You'll at least admit
The kingdom that he promised on the earth,
The pomp, the power, the glory, were all trash.
He vanished very swiftly out of sight
For all his promises, and left the fools
Who trusted him to gape and stare to see
Some day the heavens open, as he said,
And him with angels coming. When he comes
Pray give me notice ;—I, too, will believe ;
Till then, excuse me ; on such evidence
Of such grave portents, I to change my faith !
I would not hang a sparrow on it all."

Opening again at random we come upon these lines in "Giannone" :—

" Well ! once you filled my heart with wine,
That made me drunk with a life divine ;
And I pour into yours, as a recompense,
Small beer of advice and common sense.
You were a poet to me at home,
I'll be a preacher to you in Rome."

One might experience a little shock at the "small beer," &c., were he to find it in a writer of such fine taste and high culture, without previous knowledge of Mr. Browning's tricks and oddities. But the initiated reader feels no surprise when he looks at the one poet in the light of the other. Moreover, with due reverence for Mr. Browning, he will rather admire this further passage from "Giannone," which so well illustrates

the somewhat hard realistic way of stating a most important truth, which is possible even to a highly idealistic poet. There is a certain waywardness in thus dwelling upon a self-evident fact, which might be conveniently taken for granted, or, at most, daintily alluded to. But the contrast to the prevailing deft, psychological introspection of the piece, which is put forward in the following elaboration of material necessities, is sharp, pithy, and decisive as to artistic perfection. The thought that a man's bodily wants need consideration before he can be expected to take a deep interest in spiritual matters, is not in any sense new, but it is at any rate well put here, and it fully illustrates the method already adverted to.

"Faith is lovely, but is not food ;
 The heart has its pulse, but the stomach needs beans,
 And texts don't do when the appetite's rude.
 Man's but a poor weak creature at best,
 Till the fiend in the belly is lulled to rest.
 Throw *him* his dose, and the road is free
 For meditation and sanctity."

One other example shall serve our purpose. It is from "A Contemporary Criticism," in which the worthy and well-meaning Duke of Urbino shows himself, by remarks on Raffaele and his theories, wholly incapable of understanding what is meant by true art. He reads aloud to a friend a letter from the poet-artist, and injects from time to time what he takes to be pertinent criticisms. After a fine passage in which the writer of the letter strives to show how music illustrates painting, how

"Colours live in sound—the trumpet blows
 Its scarlet, and the flute its tender blue."

The inappreciative critic breaks forth lustily in this manner :—

"Vague, idle talk ! such stuff as this I call ;
 Pretty for girls—quite metaphysical,
 Almost poetic, if you will ; but then,
 For you or me, or any reasoning men,
 All visionary, vague, impractical.
 Such silly jargon lacks all common sense ;
 How can he dream it helps him paint, to know
 The way to tinkle on ten instruments ?
 Or does he fancy writing rhymes assists
 In laying colours ? Bah ! he's in the mists."

All these extracts, of course, lose, to a certain extent, in real value by being separated from their context, and put thus prominently forward for separate consideration. Taken, however, in their natural place, it will be found that they give roundness and point, and help to lift the poems in which they occur out of the rather trying deeps of analytic psychology. They act as milestones, or finger-posts, to show the reader where he is, and guard him (if untried) from supposing that he is at large in a wasteful wilderness. Nobody need try to read many of Mr. Story's poems at a stretch, but any one will find it interesting and profitable to peruse one of them several times. They cannot be readily grasped without patient study; their genuine artistic qualities—their idea, their scope, their symmetrical strength—are apparent only after it has been seen that each is a unity, and that even the passages which at first sight look forced, or over-realistic, or high fantastical, are in reality capable of being defended, and perhaps indispensable. We probably draw too hard and fast a line in excluding what is Hudibrastic from serious poetry. Of course it is a mistake, under any circumstances, to wed Beauty and the Beast, but is it not possible to make our definition of incongruities too wide? The idea of incorporating comedy with tragedy was thought to be mere Platonic moonshine, till masterful genius proved not only that the union was practicable, but that for the highest art, with certain conditions, it was excellent. Have we not all marked that burly Samuel Johnson, lumbering in student disarray down his uncouth staircase to assist his aristocratic lady visitor to her elegant carriage? These are highly poetic and pathetic circumstances, set off, in no ordinary measure, by breeches upfastened at the knee and house-shoes of ancient aspect! There is, too, a deep solemnity underlying the apparent humour in Mr. Carlyle's rebuke of the pietistic schoolmaster, who was appalled at the thought of varying his sacred songs with the irreclaimable Doric of "Scots wha ha'e." It was one of Scott's many perceptions of the best artistic propriety, that enabled him to save the life of the immaculate and sententious Menteith through the instrumentality of the wayward and officious Major Dalgetty. It would be more than Attic severity, it would be nothing short of critical

bigotry, to find fault with a single utterance of the loquacious Ritt-master, even when he apparently acts as a drag upon what would otherwise be directness of purpose and rapidity of movement. A comic undertone of choric accompaniment bursting, ever and anon, into audible expression, and demanding instant attention to an unexpected view of the case, is too important an element in the solemnities of human life to be neglected in literary products with dramatic pretension. It is the artistic necessity that postulates Dogberry with his quaint conceit of himself in relation to his superiors and to circumstances; Touchstone, with his blithe activities over against the hypochondriac verbosity of the melancholy Jaques; that "earth" and sad moon-calf Caliban at the opposite pole from Ariel the "brave spirit." We shall hesitate, therefore, before hastily concluding, that these smart, pithy, conventional touches throughout the dramatic monologue are misplaced, or even undignified. The question will rather be as to whether they are adequate to meet their manifest purpose.

So much of all that has thus far been written applies both to Mr. Browning and to Mr. Story, and it will therefore be interesting to show a still further connection between the two, in a fancy common to both; wherein, however, Mr. Story anticipates Mr. Browning. Readers of "The Two Poets of Croisic" know the bright, charming conceit with which the poem opens—the blazing log in the grate, with the manifold sparks flying upwards, and the implied lessons for the philosophic observer. Mr. Story's "Giannone" opens with a similar appropriate conceit. It starts with the notion that there is the feeling of hearty homeliness in the presence of a blazing log, that coal must always fail to induce—

"Talk of the home and the hearth! of late
Nothing we've had but house and grate—
Nothing in England to warm to the core,
Like the vast old chimneys and fires of yore,
When the great logs blazed with a genial roar."

The next thought brings the poet more to Mr. Browning's point of view—the moral, so to speak, of the blazing log, as shown to a qualified interpreter. The following is quite as

poetical as Landor's shell fretting itself for the bosom of its maternal deep :—

"Singing its death-song ! How it tells
What the cicadae chirped in the dells
When it was young, and its leafy pride
Shadowed Pan with its branches wide ;
And what old Auster, bluff and bold,
Screamed in its ear while it shivered with cold.
Thousands of idyls it has to sing,
Of love and summer, of youth and spring ;
Of the Dryad that slipt with her rustling dress
Into its murmurous leafiness ;
Of the rout of Bacchanals, ivy-crowned,
Shaking the air with the cymbal's sound,
While the yawning panther's velvet foot
Pressed the rank grasses over its root ;—
Of the timorous Naiad, pearly with dew,
That fled to the bubbling torrent near,
And, hid by the bushes, looked trembling through
At the smooth-limbed Bacchus, in love and fear ;
Of the chance and change of the season's spell,
Of musical birds and odorous flowers,
Of the storm that swept like a chorded shell
The groaning forest—of whispering showers,
Of all that, rooted there, it beheld,
Since first in its veins the young sap swelled."

All that occurs here is apt, suggestive, musical ; perhaps, however, it is more in the nature of what would pass through one's mind in a reverie, induced by the circumstances supposed, than what would be said by one speaker to his companion ; yet, the speaker only, and not the companion, being before the scenes in a dramatic monologue, the apparent soliloquy is both quite in order and in keeping with the story the speaker is coming to. It is not long till—

"the olden memories start,"

through the combined influence of the blazing log and the potent *Lacryma Christi* ; and then comes a narrative of tender reminiscence, manly frankness, and steadfastness amid surrounding powerful wiles and rank injustice, a story of shrewdness and piquant humorous criticism, a setting of an Italian Roister Doister amid circumstances with somewhat tragic outcome. The various features of the narrative are clearly

and deftly limned ; the outstanding points are set with firmness and precision, and with a suggestiveness of multiform detail ; while the speaker is so realistic in his imaginative intensity as almost to invest his audience with a living personality. This last element in a dramatic monologue is of the highest importance. It is in the opening line of "Giannone"—

"Take a cigar, draw up your chair,"

and in such direct, homely touches as—

"There's a word I must whisper to you alone,"

or,

"Fling another log on the fire ;"

and it needs no particular brightness of fancy to *see* such a picture as the following, distinct as it is with easy vivid touches and glowing with the tender interests and associations that, ever cling to warm memories.

"Sometimes like a thousand years it seems,
And then like a little month of dreams,
Since the Odes of Horace you taught me to scan,
And helped me over Homeric crevasses,
I, stumbling along where you lightly ran,
By the shores of the Poluphloisboio Thalasses—
Then how I longed to be a man !"

In "Ginevra Da Siena," Mr. Story has worked out a model specimen of excellent dramatic monologue. It is charged with emotional fervour, deep passion, singular experience, and warm personal conviction. The listener, through the genuine enthusiasm of the declaimer, gets something more in the reader's view than a mere vague, shadowy personality. She is the warm friend whose friendship has remained steadfast, despite grievous misfortunes ; the youthful companion, whose features recall with a sweet sadness the days of perfect happiness that can never be repeated ; the tender, sympathetic soul, whose whole being is concentrated for the time in that devout, reverent attitude of listening to a tale of grief, which does more for the relief of the "stricken deer" than could be accomplished by spoken volumes. She represents the modern response to the cry of *Favete linguis*, which has resounded

down the centuries from the faithful sentimental analyst of old. Such a listener is the privileged holder of a gift that links in a marked degree the human with the divine; for it is an exceptional function, that of intelligent, appreciative listening. The speaker notes the lights and shadows on the observing countenance, and the tale varies in rapidity and intensity accordingly. Sometimes it is the offended cry of personal neglect and degradation, then it is the momentary pang for all that might have been but for the perverse direction of the Fates. Then comes the wail over lost friendships, impaired self-respect, loss of individuality of character followed presently by the painful setting up of morbid, sensitive feeling, in the shape of the baseless fabric of a vision, when the look of startled apprehension recalls the deluded wanderer to the claims of the moment, and a calmer narrative flow succeeds for a time. This is but *Hamlet*, with all the other members of the *caste* in strict abeyance, *Horatio* alone being present to the metaphysical and high fantastic prince. *Ginevra* is a beautiful young lady, of sterling qualities of heart, with sensitive and clinging disposition, and a tinge of romance that gives a dash to her behaviour. Marrying one unworthy of her, whose hard and sullen disposition gives no response to her yearning affection, she gets no satisfaction to her emotional nature, and by-and-by, despite her love for her only child, she learns to love one whose genuine, manly nature might have been sufficient for her had she but known him in time. The husband has sufficient sense of what is due to himself to interfere in what is soon patent even to him, the result being the death at his hand of the favoured lover, and the imprisonment, without term, of the misguided wife. All this, with wonderful fulness of detail, and subtlety of psychological analysis, is set forth in the impassioned tale that is told by the imprisoned wife herself to the friend of her youth, who has been allowed to visit her. The obvious criticism of the whole poem is, that its length is more than the conception warrants; that sometimes the speaker enters upon particulars which could occur only to the poet himself, and that her philosophical and gnomic dexterity is hardly warranted by what the reader learns of her. Still, what may not be possible to the poor creature that is "steeped to the lips

in misery"; whose mind, from dwelling long and anxiously on its own moods, may even become swift at summarizing impressions, and profuse when the flood-gates are opened? It is of the mysterious problems that defy the usual canon of criticism, and before which one can only be silent and wonder. Apart from ordinary critical considerations, all lovers of thorough treatment of a difficult theme, of real appreciation of what is solemn, and majestic, and pathetic, of what is noble, even if fallen, and true in the midst of misfortune and error, ought to acknowledge themselves indebted to the author of this wholly remarkable poem. It has a story for the romantic, and a striking presentation of human nature for the philosophical; it should interest the poet and the artist for its charming touches of scenery and feeling; and the cry of the human soul, now for the tender presence of the child torn from it, now over its own weary doom, and again in expectation of the highest and the final relief, is a matter that concerns all that have ears to hear. Sickly sentimentalists may, perhaps, be shocked by what it pleases them to call the morality of the story; and the only pertinent answer is, that neither society nor literature can afford to waste a process of sublimation upon them. Even expurgated editions are a mistake. It is an insult to Horace, to our own Chaucer, to Shakspeare, and even to Robert Burns, to wag the head at mention of their names, as if from the conviction that, after all, they were sad dogs. Unfettered genius is its own best criterion. It is not likely to write itself down an ass, nor will it pander to what is gross and degrading. Sickly sentimentalists might improve their tone by a patient scrutiny of this interesting problem; and, meantime, let them, if they will, consider what really is the moral aim of such a poem as "*Ginevra Da Siena*." It is certainly not (if we judge them aright) what their unaided instincts lead them to determine. But it is probably something in this wise—that there is a grandeur, even something of the divine, in human nature, although fallen, and that the best of us will hesitate before proceeding to cast the first stone. The following piece of powerful imagery portrays the passionate crisis, and suggests the whole case:—

"My heart rushed to him as the tideless lake,
Nearing the sheer, precipitous abyss,

Rushes to ruin, and with one wild burst
Of storm and splendour down the rapids whirling,
Leaps, white with passion, to the lake below.
Vainly the trees along the shadowy shores,
Quivering with fear, cry to the rapids, 'Stop !'
Vainly the hillsides strive to hold them back,
God's glorious rainbow o'er their terror glowing,
They rush to ruin, as we rushed to ours."

Here and there, in her philosophical mood, the speaker strives to shift the blame on to circumstance or fore-ordination ; but the presence of her patient, tearful, loving friend brings her round to a knowledge of the real state of the case, and with pitiful thoughts of her lost child, her own weird loneliness, and her grave responsibility, she becomes soft, and clinging, and hopeful. She tries to forgive as she hopes to be forgiven. There is infinite pathos in utterances like these at the close of the eventful history :—

"And God, who sees the heart, will pity me !

* * * * *

So, let me weep upon your breast, dear friend—
My only solace for these long, long years."

In "Padre Bandelli" and "Leonardo Da Vinci," the poet, with sterling, effective humour, and quick insight into the merits of two sides of a question, balances the Philistine against the Artist, saying, on the way, many wise and salutary things on the nature and force of true culture. "Radicosfani" is a weird and graphic picture, well filled and proportioned ; easy, and direct, and strong. It marks the author's power and confidence of outlook, fully as much as anything he has written. Could anything, for instance, beat this as a description of a village perched away in mid-air, whence 'tis dizzy to cast the eyes below ?—

"Ne'er a home for miles to be found,
Save where huddled on some grim peak
A village clinging in fear looks round
Over the country vast and bleak,
As if it had fled from the lower ground,
Refuge from horrors there to seek."

Not unworthy, moreover, of Coleridge, is the sudden vision of

a departed shade in one of those terrible places that one instinctively peoples with ghosts :—

“ When sudden behind a rock's dark crest
Uprose a shape of portentous height ;
A coal-black plume from his helmet flowed,
His eyes in the vizor's shadow gleamed,
And here and there a steel flash showed
An outline vague and dim that seemed
To hover along the dusky road
Like a thing that is neither real nor dreamed.”

The story of this shade is wild and weird as the passionate career of vengeance told of the Children of the Mist. It is well conceived and sustained, in accordance with the character at stake. The poem is striking from beginning to end ; one of those vigorous, thrilling products which, apparently thrown off at a white heat, will not let the reader away till the last line has been told :—

“ The figure bowed
His lofty stature and clinched his spear,
And slow, like the mist of a fading cloud,
In the shadow I watched it disappear.
And my heart in my bosom beat aloud
With a feeling of mystery, doubt, and fear.”

“ Monsignore Del Fiocco ” is a bit of penetrating, searching irony, forming by suggestion a scathing exposure of unworthy priestcraft. Mr. Story, in this poem, makes a worthy contribution to a department of literature which is graced by some of our greatest names from Chaucer downwards. The mood and tone of the poem, no less than frequent forms of expression, continually remind the reader of Mr. Browning, but the resemblance suggested is less that of imitation than that of independent work of genuine fibre, in the same sphere. The short, sharp parentheses, the contemptuous asides, the brisk sallies of innuendo, the mock-heroic attitudes, are all incidental to the subject, and not extraneous and overlaid :—

“ Dear man ! sweet man ! in all those troublous times,
What zeal was his !—how earnestly he worked !
Who can forget his pure self-sacrifice—
His virtuous deeds, above this world's reward ?
Done for pure Christian duty—done, of course,
For Holy Church—all was for Holy Church—

(Without a notion of this world's reward)—
 All for the good of souls and Holy Church—
 (*Ora pro nobis*, and that sort of thing)—
 All to bring sinners back again to God,
 And from the harvest root the devil's tares—
In omnia saecula—amen—amen."

Of the poems in the antique, "Cleopatra" has rapid and melodious lyric movement, and passionate intensity of idea and expression ; there is in "Pan in Love" a close appreciation of the rough, selfish vigour, and the untutored energy of desire that mark the personality of the myth. "Cassandra" is a warm plea for the rights of humanity apart from gifts that are properly divine, containing such lines as these :—

"Only in ignorance is joy ; to rest
 In blind fond trust upon the Present's breast.
 'Tis more than death, far more, to see, to know ;
 Take back the gift ! We creatures here below
 Need all our blindness, need the mortal veil
 Which shuts the Future out, obscures the sense,
 And hides us from our Fate. Not too much light
 May man endure. Pure truth is too intense,
 It blinds us. Perfect Love at its full height
 Kills with excess of rapture."

All the lyrics in the modern division are in the true vein, rounded in form, rich in melody, dainty in sentiment and expression. There is a fine sense of the interaction of man and Nature in such poems as "The Lilac," "Spring," "Autumn," "In the Moonlight," "At Peace" ; a thorough grasp of true philosophical sentimentalism in "Nina," "Giulietta," "An English Husband to his Italian Wife," "Black Eyes," and "Under the Cypressess" ; while the fresh pure spirit of the open air permeates "The Gaucho," "In the Garden," "Under the Ilexes" (where distant sounds with their effects are used to admirable purpose, the poet and his fancies being—

"Even as these noiseless yellow butterflies
 That poise on grass or flower, and drift away
 Like wavering leaves in their perpetual play").

as well as "The Alpine Song," "On the Sea-shore," and "Ophelia." One little lyric, "The Sad Country," deserves to be quoted entire, so deep and tender is it in its pathos, so affecting in its quiet simplicity of sentiment and form, so pure and sweet in tone.

"There is a sad, sad country,

Where often I go to see

A little child that for all my love

Will never come back to me.

There smiles he serenely on me

With a look that makes me cry ;

And he prattling runs beside me

Till I wish that I could die.

That country is dim and dreary,

Yet I cannot keep away,

Though the shadows there are heavy and dark,

And the sunlight sadder than they.

And there, in a ruined garden,

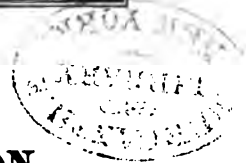
Which once was gay with flowers,

I sit by a broken fountain,

And weep and pray for hours."

It has already been indicated that Mr. Story is probably at his best in dramatic monologue, and it has to be added now that his drama of "Nero" would be a particularly fine acting drama, were actors and audience all of quite exceptional calibre. It is not easy to rehabilitate the past so that it may have a living interest for moderns. Shakspeare will give it you, with bold anachronisms carelessly subjected to mighty genius, and you will rejoice in your appreciation of "Julius Cæsar," or "Coriolanus." But others, besides Shakspeare, may not venture where he feared not to tread, and their labour, therefore, is for the "fit though few." With these "Nero" will be duly appreciated. It is a drama to be read and enjoyed in the quiet of one's study, or listened to as it was when the author read it in presence of Mrs. Kemble and a few friends at Rome. The leading characters are carefully and distinctly drawn, *Nero's* mother *Agrippina*, in particular, being outlined with remarkable firmness and distinctness. The play is stately, forcible, and exhaustive of its subject—in these qualities it is higher than Addison's "Cato"—it has unity of purpose, variety of movement, symmetry of plan, and beauty of effect, but it wants freedom of sweep, recklessness as to historical accuracy, and the undertone of comic criticism. What one would like to see now is *Agrippina* or *Seneca* in dramatic monologue.

THOMAS BAYNE.



FANNY'S PARAGON.

CHAPTER I.

MR. MOSTYN lived with his son Horace and his two daughters in a pleasant country neighbourhood on the borders of England and Wales. Since the death of his wife, three years ago, a maiden sister of his own had kept house for him, and taken charge of little Katie, while Fanny's education was being completed at a school in London. This process, however, being now concluded, inasmuch as Fanny had attained her eighteenth year, the aunt had abdicated in favour of the niece, and gone off to take care of a sister's family during the mother's illness.

Notwithstanding his daughter having finished her education, and his son being almost of age, Mr. Mostyn was a comparatively young man ; that is to say, he was little over forty, having married absurdly young, and, as boys often do, having elected to fall in love with a woman much older than himself. Nor was she only older in actual years, but in temperament and habit of mind as well, so that by contrast she made him appear even younger than he really was. She had been rather handsome, sensible in most things, except marrying a boy of twenty, and made his home comfortable ; but after the first glamour had worn off his experience of married life, John Mostyn found he had made a mistake, but wisely determined to make the best of it. When, therefore, the stout, comely matron of forty-five passed away from this world, his sorrow, though sincere, was not of a passionate description, but rather took the form of anxious regret lest he should not do justice to his girls. As regarded income, without being rich he was comfortably off, and his late wife's money, though settled on her children, was, to some extent, at

his service, and he spared nothing in completing Fanny's education thoroughly, choosing for the purpose a school his wife had known and approved of. Here Fanny learnt about as much as ordinary girls usually do learn, and came home able to speak and read French tolerably, and German a little, playing and singing pleasantly, but in no way remarkably; fairly cultivated as regarded English in general, able to write a lady-like note, and to keep up a sufficiently intelligent conversation *tête-à-tête*, but very helpless as mistress of the house; a shy hostess, whom gentlemen pitied and ladies ignored; an utterly inexperienced housekeeper, whom the servants took advantage of. Her accounts were a sore burden to her, and her management generally was pervaded by an air of makeshift and indecision which tended to drive her father more and more into the retreat of his own sanctum, where his books and papers gave him occupation and force of habit tended to dull the sense of much that was wanting to complete his home happiness. Horace, who had had a good public school and university education up to the present, had fixed upon the bar as his future profession, and was now at home during the vacation, it being summer. Fanny had persuaded her father (always glad to give her pleasure) to let her invite a school friend for the holidays. The young lady in question was not exactly a schoolfellow of Fanny's in the ordinary acceptation of the word, for she was at least five years her senior, and had been a parlour boarder, while Fanny was a little schoolgirl.

Eunice Brooke was an orphan, and her few relations were scattered about the world—some in India, some in the Colonies. They had come and gone again during her girlhood, showing her kindness each in turn, but none so situated that they could offer her a fixed home, and so it came about that she really felt more at home with the kind old cousins who kept the school where she had been educated, than anywhere else. And here it was that Fanny Mostyn first saw her, and straightway became devoted to her, as girls often do devote themselves to one of their own sex, placing them on the pedestal hereafter to be dedicated to the hero of their maidenhood, until it be finally occupied once for all, or destined to stand empty for ever.

"Fanny's Paragon," as Horace contemptuously nicknamed the young lady he had never seen, was never out of her mouth, and, truth to tell, Mr. Mostyn somewhat dreaded her advent, having formed an idea that Miss Brooke was a young lady of determined character, and likely to upset the even tenour of his home life. Even little Katie, with the flippancy of a precocious and much-petted child, tried her elder sister's equanimity considerably by her teasing, secretly aided and abetted by her brother. Fanny, at length exasperated beyond the power of reply, took refuge in a philosophic silence, and the day before Miss Brooke's arrival only remarked with heroic self-repression, "Ah, well, you'll all be able to judge for yourselves to-morrow." And for once Horace found he could not "get a rise out of Fan," nor could Katie provoke a hasty answer even by her curious observation of all Fanny's arrangements for her friend's comfort, on which she delivered her criticisms in public, betraying poor Fanny's little make-shifts and contrivances as only an *enfant terrible* can. Perhaps even more trying than Horace's "chaff" and Katie's teasing, was the consciousness of her father's expectation that the visitor would prove strong-minded and self-willed, and inclined to manage everybody's business in her own way. And this was the more provoking that Fanny felt she herself must be to blame for having given so false an impression of her dear friend, forgetting that although she was willing to accept Eunice as her sovereign lady, it did not follow that everyone else felt the same obligation, and still less that Eunice desired they should do so.

CHAPTER II.

HAPPILY unconscious of the awful picture the Gable End party had represented to themselves, and dubbed it her likeness, Eunice Brooke stepped out of the fly which brought her from the station into the arms of the beaming Fanny, who stood in the porch to receive her.

"Pleasant," was the adjective most descriptive of the new arrival. Taller than her friend, and with a nice figure, her face did not strike you at first as being absolutely pretty, but the smile was very charming, and people seldom got beyond that, although, if they did, the details were in no way remarkable as far as features were concerned ; only a fresh complexion, good white teeth, and a general air of capability, disarmed much criticism of a wide but well-formed mouth, a very ordinary nose, and frank, grey-blue eyes, not beautiful, but far from inexpressive.

Katie was lurking in the background, hoping to see without being seen, and eaten up with curiosity. Eunice's observing eyes, however, spied her out; and she went up to her, greeting her very kindly by name, and leaving her somehow with a shamefaced sense of being caught spying, mingled with one of self-satisfaction at being acknowledged individually. Meanwhile the study door opened, and Mr. Mostyn emerged with a reluctant instinct of good breeding to greet his daughter's friend. Without knowing it, he spoke somewhat formally ; but she thanked him so frankly, and with such perfect absence of missishness on the one hand, or too much *sang froid* on the other, that Fanny who watched them furtively in an agony of suppressed excitement, read with intense relief the meaning of the slight change which came over her father's face and into the tone of his voice as he ushered the visitor into the drawing-room, and continued a slight conversation until the appearance of afternoon tea caused a diversion. Horace somewhat ostentatiously kept aloof till Mr. Mostyn told Katie to go and call him ; Fanny meanwhile assisted her friend to lay aside her wraps and black felt travelling hat.

The trim figure showed to advantage in a well-made dark dress, and the removal of the hat added to the pleasantness of the face by showing a broad low forehead, and nut-brown hair, waving with a natural curl, which led its possessor to dress it more with regard to this characteristic than with a slavish following of the last new fashion ; not that she indulged in extravagant ringlets, for the hair was neither long nor specially plentiful, only soft and fluffy, and gathered into a sort of knot of little curls in the nape of her neck.

Horace now made his appearance, trying hard to look as if he didn't care, but overdoing the part.

Eunice received him a shade more formally than his father, but presently drew him into the conversation, and before tea was finished the whole party were chatting away merrily as if they had known each other for days instead of minutes.

Fanny was in the seventh heaven of delight, and could scarcely refrain from confiding to her friend all the speculations on her behalf, when they found themselves alone in the latter's room; but she had enough tact not to betray matters at this early stage of the proceedings. On coming down dressed for dinner, Eunice looking very well in a pale lavender muslin with a little bunch of red roses nestling in her brown curls, they found Horace and Katie already in the room, for Katie had defied all precedent, and insisted on sitting beside her father all dinner time, though she had professedly dined in the middle of the day. Slipping away to her father's study, Fanny knocked and entered hurriedly: Mr. Mostyn was generally to be found there till the moment dinner was announced, for although he always made some preparation for the meal, he did not ordinarily don the full evening suit in which his daughter now beheld him, not as usual, seated with a book, but about to proceed to the drawing-room.

"Oh! papa!" she exclaimed, linking her arm into his, "I came to ask you—do tell me, what do you think of her?"

Smiling at her eagerness he replied frankly, "Well pussy, to be quite candid, I am very agreeably surprised; I think your friend is ladylike and very pleasing; her manner is charming, just what I should wish my Fanny's to be." And he stroked the blushing cheek upturned towards him. Then came dinner, and the conversation was very agreeable, more or less general, though Mr. Mostyn and Eunice bore the brunt of it. The table was prettily laid out with flowers and fruit, and the young hostess had evidently done her best; nevertheless there were one or two lapses on the part of the cook, which poor Fanny eyed in a woebegone manner. Eunice deftly turned the conversation into a popular channel, but not before Mr. Mostyn had remarked to her in an aside, "With all due deference to your excellent cousins, Miss Brooke, I am afraid that household economy does not find a place in their curriculum."

Eunice smiled as she answered, "I don't think my cousins

are to blame, Mr. Mostyn, but rather the system of ordinary school-girl education. My cousin Deborah is a capital house-keeper, and always insisted on giving me instructions which I am afraid I sometimes did not appreciate at the time ; but then you know I was one of themselves ; the other pupils had no time, and even less inclination."

"I hope you will take compassion on my poor little house-keeper," was the *sotto voce* reply, "and give her the benefit of some of cousin Deborah's instructions : you know whatever *you* say or do is right in Fanny's eyes !"

"She is a dear affectionate little thing, and thinks only too well of me !" replied Eunice, warmly, and then turned to address Katie, who of course had been listening to every word.

Then came the evening. Ordinarily Mr. Mostyn left the drawing-room, and retired to his study immediately after coffee had been served ; but on this occasion he remained where he was. Music being called for, Eunice sat down without notes, and played with much taste and a nice clear touch various selections from Chopin, Heller, Schumann, and such composers. Mr. Mostyn, who was really fond of music, stood by the piano, enjoying it thoroughly, as, in a dreamy way, he watched the well-formed, *not* small, and capable-looking white hands flit over the keys in a way very unlike Fanny's little red fingers struggling to compass the octaves, or slurring them over altogether. But Eunice insisted on Fanny's singing, offering to accompany her, and doing so with such marked good effect that Fanny's voice had never been heard to greater advantage, being sweet and true, and exercised freely, being now no longer hampered by a half-known accompaniment. To Horace's surprise and secret delight Miss Brooke now said she understood he played the flute, and ended by accompanying him also, much to his satisfaction. So the evening passed only too quickly, and it would not be too much to aver that every member of the family dreamt more or less that night of "Fanny's Paragon !"

CHAPTER III.

IT was upon a Monday that Eunice arrived at the Gable End, consequently it followed that next morning was Tuesday. Punctually at the hour named by Fanny the previous evening Eunice appeared in the dining-room, where she was told there would be family prayers, and breakfast afterwards at nine o'clock. Eunice had a habit of carrying her knitting in her pocket, and so occupied herself during the ten minutes which elapsed before Mr. Mostyn put in an appearance, followed by Katie.

"Ah! Miss Brooke, punctual and industrious. What an example to us all," said he, shaking hands. "Katie, call your sister, and say we are waiting to have tea made."

"I know why Fanny is late this morning," replied the irrepressible Katie. "She put her hair into curl-papers last night to try and do it like Miss Brooke's, but I'm sure it wouldn't answer. It's as limp as rats' tails."

Mr. Mostyn laughed, and Eunice couldn't help smiling, for Fanny, on parting from her the night before, after a long talk over things in general, had confided her intention to her friend, who tried to dissuade her on the score of her hair not being naturally curly.

"You'll see what a figure she'll come down. How Horace will laugh."

Katie was about to leave the room with this remark when Eunice quietly intercepted her, and laying her hand kindly on the little girl's shoulder, whispered, "Katie, please don't make any remark on Fanny's hair when she comes down. It is not pleasant to have attention drawn to one in public. It would vex me if you did. Will you do this for me as well as for Fanny's sake?"

Katie looked considerably astonished; she was so little accustomed to be spoken to thus. Gradually her colour deepened, and her eyes fell. Then suddenly looking up into the pleasant face that was watching hers, nodded her head in a half-deprecating way, and murmured, "I'll do it for you," and rushed off as Eunice thanked her.

Mr. Mostyn had caught a word or two, and now remarked,

"You have been remonstrating with Katie on Fanny's behalf, Miss Brooke. Thank you for it. Katie is too glib with her quizzing, it is not good for her; nor is it kind towards poor Fanny. I am afraid I have not been sufficiently particular, and sometimes too ready to laugh at Katie's remarks."

"She is very ready," replied Eunice. "Her sense of fun is very strong, and she has keen observation; but I am sure she has a warm heart, and would not wilfully give pain if she realised it."

Presently Katie returned with the keys, which she put into Eunice's hands, saying, "Fanny asks you to make tea, and please, papa, don't wait prayers for her; she has been kept, but will be down soon." A roguish glance at Eunice was all the scope Katie allowed her sense of the ludicrous, and the self-denial was acknowledged by an understanding look.

Prayers concluded, Fanny slipped in, looking rather shame-faced, with her hair dressed as usual, only most rebelliously fluffy and rough; but no remarks transpired, and breakfast was concluded satisfactorily.

"Well, my dears, what are we to do to-day to amuse Miss Brooke?" said Mr. Mostyn, rising.

That "we" was a revelation to Fanny. Then he meant to join them!—a most unusual piece of condescension.

"Let's have a pic-nic, papa," suggested Katie, ever ready.

"Or go and see Oldminster," said Fanny.

Oldminster was their county town, and had a fine cathedral and some good shops.

"Or climb up Breeze Hill," was Horace's idea.

"There, Miss Brooke," said Mr. Mostyn, "you have three suggestions offered to you. Do any of them commend themselves?"

"They all commend themselves," she replied, brightly; "it is *embarras de richesses*; please do you decide for us. Yours shall be the casting vote."

"The pic-nic, papa, please, please," whispered Katie, earnestly.

Mr. Mostyn looked pleasantly at his little girl, and from her to his guest.

"That's giving Katie the casting vote," remarked Horace, rather shortly.

"Couldn't the walk up Breeze Hill be construed into a pic-nic, if we took our luncheon at the top?" was Eunice's compromising suggestion.

"Oh yes," said Fanny, with alacrity, for the idea of an impromptu lunch for more than their own little party had been exercising her poor little housekeeper's brain; and a pic-nic to her meant asking several neighbouring girls and young men.

Horace, on the other hand, had no idea of making their guest common property. So Eunice's amendment met with general approval, and a very pleasant expedition it was; and Eunice proved herself thoroughly sound in wind and limb, declining the help which both father and son willingly proffered.

Fanny was lost in further admiration of her friend; Katie was as happy as a kitten at play; Horace was beginning to waver in his allegiance to his last lady love (their name was legion, and nothing very serious had ever transpired). So they reached the top of Breeze Hill, admired the view, ate their luncheon merrily, and came down in great glee, arriving at home pretty late to have a "high tea," which for once Mr. Mostyn declared he preferred to a regular dinner, much to Fanny's satisfaction.

Next day Oldminster was decided on, and again Mr. Mostyn, as a matter of course, constituted himself one of the party. Eunice was very greatly pleased with the town, and profoundly interested in the old cathedral. She showed herself by no means unacquainted with architecture and archæology, with a side glance at English history. Fanny was again lost in admiration, Katie was rather subdued, and Horace decidedly bored, but not the less struck with Miss Brooke's charms. Mr. Mostyn certainly had the best of it, and made himself very agreeable, and came home in high good humour, as men do when a pleasant and pretty woman shows them she has appreciated their conversation, and been willing to benefit by their information.

The third day there was a garden party at a neighbour's, and, wonderful to relate, Mr. Mostyn actually volunteered to accompany the young people, a thing unknown hitherto in their experience. He did not play lawn tennis himself, and Horace did. So the latter, to use his own expression, "cut

the governor out this time," or thought he did, as Miss Brooke played rather well. But between whiles she found time to walk about the grounds with his father, and visit the garden and conservatory, where she was even more at home than on the lawn tennis ground, though even there she had the enviable faculty (as Mr. Mostyn told her) of looking cool and playing without gymnastics. As he sat watching the game he had ample opportunity of observing her, without, however, causing any remark. So that day also came to a close, and Horace was quite in love with his sister's friend. A little evening party having been arranged to come off at the Gables the next night, there was plenty to do and arrange during the day, and Eunice's ready fingers, happy suggestions, admirable taste, and perfect good humour, were strongly brought into play. Horace, of course, was her right-hand man, but Mr. Mostyn kept coming and going, and, being appealed to, astonished his son and daughter by having distinct opinions on the matter of decorations. But he astonished them still more by acceding to a suggestion which even Katie shook her head over, that his study should be given up for refreshments. Eunice made the said suggestion so prettily, that it was granted without a second thought. What anxiety about the arrangements Eunice saved Fanny none but the poor girl herself ever knew, though Mr. Mostyn guessed ; so that not only was the party a far prettier one than the last somewhat unsuccessful attempt, but when evening came, Fanny was not fagged to death, and had a chance of looking her very best in a dress of her friend's choosing—a simple white one, with laburnum in her hair (for Fanny was brunette). Now, had Fanny been left to herself, she intended wearing a dress that had been her mother's, a silk, and absurdly old for her, in which she had appeared once before, and made her father feel a distressing sense of incongruity which he did not know how to explain. It now explained itself, as he confided to Eunice, herself looking very well in a pale blue cashmere, with silver bands in her wavy hair, and a little bunch of white azaleas.

Horace flattered himself he should again cut the governor out, as he, Horace, danced with unflagging energy, while the governor had never been known to walk through a quadrille within the memory of his own children. Much to Horace's

disgust, therefore, he found his father before him in requesting Eunice to "coach him" a little, a process which did not require great labour, as it happened that Mr. Mostyn had been a very good dancer in his very young manhood, and in point of fact suited Miss Brooke very much better as a partner than the slim youth who looked at his feet as he moved. But Eunice did more than merely amuse herself that evening. She was at Fanny's elbow, helping her to entertain the older guests ; pairing them off for supper, and to find partners for the plain girls and for the shy youths ; so that the party was emphatically a success, and Fanny enjoyed it as much as her guests, and Horace was at Miss Brooke's feet. Some law was given next morning, and Mr. Mostyn thought himself the first person down at half-past nine. But on entering his study he found it almost restored to its normal condition, as a retiring housemaid slipped out of his way, leaving Eunice standing on a chair, with her dress tucked up, dusting books in an upper shelf. She was fairly caught, and coming down, blushing prettily, she made some sort of apology, on the score of having been the one who had ventured to ask for the use of the room the day before. Mr. Mostyn's answer, however, was so flattering, that it failed to allay her blushes, and it is difficult to say how the subject would have ended had not Horace appeared on the scene, followed presently by Fanny.

CHAPTER IV.

THE day after the party was a somewhat desultory one, but none the less pleasant, for Eunice had the tact to organise some occupations for Katie, who might otherwise have yawned through the time in the condition occasionally resulting from past fatigue and excitement, when "idle hands" are gratuitously provided with "mischief." Horace was happy in hanging about the object of his now undisguised admiration (somewhat to her inconvenience), and Fanny reposed on her laurels. Mr. Mostyn looked a little distrait, it must be confessed, and came and went rather erratically, and seemed disinclined to remain long in his study, though it was so charmingly prepared

for him. Evening came, and brought with it an incident which placed Fanny's friend in a new light, as favourable as any in which she had yet figured.

A little child, grand-daughter of an old woman who looked after poultry and pigs at the Gables, managed to overturn a kettle of boiling water on herself just as the party were assembling on the lawn after dinner. Her piteous cries were audible in the still air of evening, and Eunice made for the scene of distress followed by the rest, Katie guiding her. Here Mr. Mostyn found her with her pretty dress fastened back, and the scalded child in her lap, having the poor little foot tenderly bandaged after proper remedies had been applied. He did not say much, but he noted the firm yet gentle touch, the air of decision, the cheerful, kindly voice, which brought common sense to the help of compassion, and introduced order into a scene of helpless confusion. Horace too was impressed, though in a feebler way, and tried some weak compliments which were snubbed, and at length retired to rest, in profound despair to dream that he was being alternately scalded and nursed by Fanny's interesting friend. He woke early and rose, at length solemnly determined to propose that very day.

"It would be better to know the worst and be put out of my misery," he gloomily argued with himself.

It was Sunday, and circumstances did not favour Horace, though it is to be feared his perturbed state of mind interfered considerably with his duties. The pretty village church was within an easy walk across pleasant fields, and all the party attended morning service, and after a quiet afternoon succeeding an early dinner, returned to evening service and came home to supper. Part of the afternoon Eunice devoted to reading with Katie, whose interested attention was aroused in a way that struck her father as he passed behind them, with a pang of remorse at the want of pleasant religious instruction his child had suffered from. Not wishing to disturb he went away, and chanced upon a book Eunice had been reading to herself. It was marked, and gave some insight into the reader's mind; Mr. Mostyn read the book through before night and was the better of it, albeit its instructions were filtered through a channel other than that of abstract desire

for improvement. Meanwhile Horace wandered about in a condition of suppressed distraction, and yet, without presence of mind to take advantage of his opportunities when they presented themselves. There was something in Eunice's manner which repelled him gently. Mr. Mostyn, however, saw what was going on, and fancied he was amused by it; Fanny, too, had an inkling of Horace's state of mind, having had some previous experience, but a kind of reverence which mingled with her love and admiration for her friend, kept her from hinting at her brother's devotion. A little sacred music closed the Sunday evening; Monday morning came again and Eunice's week had run its course. It is needless to say she was pressed to extend her visit, but home arrangements precluded it. Horace had come to his last chance; the whole party assembled to see her depart; Fanny and Katie accompanied her in the fly to the station, Horace walked by a short cut and joined them; Mr. Mostyn accompanied him; the conversation between them, though somewhat desultory and broken, made it clear to the father that his son was determined to speak to their guest. Mr. Mostyn forced himself to make a few comments—he was very young—too young for the lady, it was a mistake marrying a woman older than himself. Mr. Mostyn even gently hinted that he had found it so himself. Still Horace was of age, and partially independent, Miss Brooke was in every way charming, and there Mr. Mostyn stopped rather abruptly.

"Try your luck, my boy," and he laid his hand kindly on his son's shoulder. "I think I won't go any further with you, Horace; Miss Brooke has a sufficient escort without me. Make my adieux, if necessary, although I think I said all that was right and proper when I put her into the carriage; she won't miss me."

For half a second Horace glanced up, and the thought flashed through his mind that the governor was in love with Miss Brooke himself. It had not time to take shape, however, as Mr. Mostyn held out his hand, and Horace grasped it, both in silence, and so they parted.

Horace arrived at the station eager and excited.

"Where is papa?" cried the girls together.

He explained, and something in Miss Brooke's face seemed

to send a shiver through him. She turned away hastily, and busied herself about her luggage. The train came up ; there was the usual hurry and bustle, affectionate embraces from Fanny and Katie. Horace stood on the step of the carriage as it moved, and held Eunice's hand.

"May I write?" he inquired, hoarsely.

She looked surprised. "What about?"

"You and myself. May I?"

"*Please don't*—oh! take care, the train is moving. Thank you very much, good-bye."

So he had tried his luck, and failed, and he knew it, and went home and told his father, and forthwith packed up his port-manteau and went off to the Continent, where he met a charming English family, with three lovely daughters, and he was not altogether unhappy.

* * * * *

Eunice sat in the old school-room at her aunts'. The school had been given up, and this room was, more or less, her peculiar property, but all her endeavours to beautify it had failed to give it an air of genuine comfort or elegance. Still it was a large, airy room, where she could practice, and write, and work without feeling that she was disturbing her aunts' ideas of propriety and drawing-room array.

The old ladies had come to the conclusion that the house would be too large for them for the future, and were making arrangements for a move ; so that Eunice, sitting alone in that empty school-room, at the piano, but not playing, felt a little as if her old world were going to pieces about her, and the glimpse of a new one, which began to open up at the Gable End, was passing out of sight under a cloud. A week had elapsed since she left. Fanny had acknowledged her first letter, announcing her safe journey, and expressing her thanks for the pleasant visit. Mr. Mostyn sent his kind regards, and that was all, except—P.S. Horace was going abroad.

The old school was in a suburb of London, S.W. It was now late summer, and town was empty, hot, dull, dusty. Through the open window dingy laurels showed white, or rather grey, against a background of newly built, red brick houses. Only the milkman seemed to visit the street.

Infinite dullness pervaded everything. A stray cat occasionally ventured to cross the baked road, and a far-away organ ground out a melancholy air. All was very blank without and within. Then a step came along the pavement on the the shady side ; it increased in sound, paused, crossed the road, hesitated a moment, yes—no—yes, it *was* coming up, coming up the flagged walk through the dusty laurels. The bell rang, and was answered ; a man's voice spoke, and presently the school-room door opened.

"A gentleman for you, Miss Brooke, if you please," was Susan's somewhat bewildered announcement, for the visitor had declined to be shown into the drawing-room when he had ascertained that Miss Brooke was in the school-room and alone.

Eunice half rose from the piano, but before she could leave her seat Mr. Mostyn was shaking her hand warmly. "Pray sit down again, Miss Brooke ; I like to see you at the piano ; it reminds me of your visit to the Gable End. We missed you dreadfully."

"Did you really?—you are very kind to say so ; I assure you I enjoyed myself greatly. How are Fanny and Katie?" She spoke a little hurriedly, and played dumb music on the keys before her.

"Very well, thank you. No doubt they would have sent you many kind messages had they known I was coming here. The truth is, I have come on my own account, Miss Brooke. Eunice," and he laid his hand on the one that wandered over the ivories, "we, *I*, can't do without you. Will you come back to the Gable End, and make it your home ; and—and——." All the rest was lost, and Eunice's answer as well, for she turned round on the piano stool, and found herself clasped in Francis Mostyn's arms.

After that the dusty laurels, and the glaring street, and the melancholy organ were all transformed into side scenes of Eden ; and soon after the Gable End represented Eden itself wherein reigned long, and wisely, and happy Fanny's Paragon. In fact, there is every reason to believe she is reigning there now.

CONSTANCE ISABELLE BRIGGS.



MARTINDALE'S MONEY.

A NOVEL.

By the Author of "Old as the Hills," "Kate Savage," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXVII.

GILL WRITES A LETTER.



WHEN Gill got back to the town again the church clocks were chiming eight. He quickened his pace and turned into a dingy street, at the upper end of which was to be found the brass plate of his legal adviser, on a green baize door. The lawyer himself was just coming out of his office when the client made his appearance.

"Ah, my friend, here you are. We have managed to get you out for a breath or two of fresh air," said the solicitor, in a tone which implied due appreciation of his own skill and perseverance.

"Yes, here I am," said Gill, rather ungraciously; "but wot's the use of being out if you've got to go back again?"

"We must be thankful for small mercies," replied the other, buttoning up his overcoat, "and that is the view you took of it when you were inside. There is nothing particular you want to say to me to-night, is there?"

"I should like to know what sort of chance you think I've got."

"Well," returned his adviser, with unwonted frankness, "between ourselves, it's a devilish bad one. However, I have retained Mr. Wilkins, and you may depend upon it we shall do all we can for you."

Gill saw silent, but he still hung about the doorstep. The candour of the opinion which had just been vouchsafed made a deep impression upon him, and was in no wise affected by

the assurance that the best services of solicitor and counsel would be at his disposal.

"Suppose they bring me in guilty, how much can I get for it?" he asked.

"Well, you might get a good many years, you know; but it is no use being down in the mouth. We must bear the brunt of it, and hope for the best."

Gill said nothing for the moment. His courage seemed to sink into his boots. The affable manner in which, by way of toning down the edges of the situation, the man of law spoke in the plural number, comforted him not one whit.

"I can't wait now," remarked the solicitor, who thought his client unreasonable. "Come and see me to-morrow morning," and so saying, he left the doorstep, and went briskly up the street.

His client looked after him with a moody gaze until his figure disappeared in the darkness, and even afterwards he remained staring abstractedly at nothing in particular, until aroused from his meditations by a cheery whistling from within the office. Gill went up to the green door, and pushed it open.

"Hullo!" exclaimed a youthful clerk, who seemed to be in high spirits at the expiration of office hours.

"Hullo!" responded Gill, but in far less jubilant key.

"It was you talking to the gov'nor, I suppose?" remarked the clerk.

"Yes."

"You came the wrong time of day."

"I couldn't come before," was the perfectly truthful answer.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the youth. "You were on a visit, I suppose?"

"I don't want any of your chaff," observed Gill, with some surliness.

"Bless you, I am not chaffing," said the clerk. "I thought you meant it for fun. How do they treat you up there?"

"Never mind about that."

"All right," said the youth, carelessly tossing some blotting paper into his desk, "I'm off now."

"I tell you what," observed Gill. "You can give me a sheet of paper. I shall very likely want to write a letter."

The clerk, lavish with his master's stationery, opened his desk once again, and drew out three or four sheets of letter paper, and envelopes to correspond. Then he turned out the gas, and the two went into the street together.

"I would not be in your shoes for a trifle," the youth remarked, confidentially.

"Why not?"

"Why not? why because in about another fortnight you will have to go back to that place on the hill."

"It does not follow that I shall have to stay there."

The other whistled a tune.

"What are you whistling about?" Gill asked sharply.

"A chap may whistle if he likes, I suppose.

"I don't know about that; you're a precious cheeky youngster. What did you mean, eh?"

"Well, I rather meant that you haven't got a leg to stand on. Don't you tell the gov'nor I said so, but last night I heard him talking about your case, and saying you had not got the ghost of a chance."

A few moments later they parted, and Gill revolved the opinions of master and man, as he wandered aimlessly up the street. Presently the cravings of the inner man induced him to put away for a time the anxieties which weighed upon him. He made a heavy and indigestible meal in a cook-shop, and then sought a night's lodging in a neighbouring public-house. There, in his somewhat coldly furnished apartment, and by the light of a dip-candle, he pondered on his present fortunes and his future prospects. The latter he now looked upon as black—black as ink. There had been a good deal that was discouraging in his solicitor's tone, and the candour of that gentleman's subordinate had furnished the last straw which had, so to say, broken the back of his hopefulness. By-and-by (when the streets were quiet, and the bar below had been cleared of customers, who would fain have lingered longer), with the note-paper which had been given to him, and the assistance of pen and ink, which he had borrowed from the landlady, he commenced to write a letter.

Laboriously he pursued the unaccustomed task, and at last, after many blots, smears, and scratchings, he accomplished it. The sweat attributable to concentrated efforts, mental and

manual, stood upon his forehead as he finished the last stroke with the pen. Slowly and doubtfully he spelt over his composition by the light of the fast diminishing candle. It ran as follows :—

“HONOURED SUR,—I writes this in grate truble of mind for I have dun a thing wot makes me deeply ankshous. I wished for to serve your interests and in so doing I have put myself and my charaktur in grate perill. You will remember the night as you met the Magor in the avanew. I was there too, behind a tree and heard most of wot was said. I saw wot the Magor took out of his pocket and I knew then that he had got there the docyment as he spoke about and you wished for to see. It came into my hed afterward that if I could get the docyment away from him and give it up to you, I should be carrying out my duty to him as impoyed me and should be liberally rewarded. Now you will understand how it is this here crewel charge is brought against me, and me as innocent as the babe. I never wanted to hurt that Magor and I did not think as he could have recognised me, but unfortunately for me he saw who it was, and so I have been accused. I wish for you to know all about it, and whether I ought to say all the truth to my lawyer so that he may explain to the juge. I didn't wont that man's money and I put it away, all safe, and I am truly willing to give it up. But I have taken the docyment and will send it with this so that you may act as you think right. I feel sure as you will deal generous with me and get me free of my terribil position which I do not deserve, for honoured sur, I am your obedient servant and have tried for to do my duty.

“E. GILL.”

“P.S.—I thought as the Magor had no right to the docyment. Please reply immediate.”

The weather had changed ; the sun could not make itself seen or felt in Hexbury on the next day—the day before the election ; the rain came in a continuous downpour ; slush had taken the place of snow, the air was no longer clear and keen, but clogged with a dismal fog. It was a day which, under ordinary circumstances, must have produced deep depression of spirits, and an enervating reluctance to be up and doing.

But the circumstances were not ordinary, and Hexbury politically speaking, was all alive. Excited men in mackintoshes hurried to and fro. Cabs rattled constantly through the swampy streets, and groups gathered here and there, and argued and gesticulated, regardless of the rain. The central committee rooms of the candidate were the scenes of the greatest amount of bustle and excitement. At the "George," the Conservative head-quarters, the waiters hurried to and fro, bearing liquors of every variety, pursued by shrill commands from the distracted barmaids. Round the main entrance hung a knot of seedy-looking elderly men who were employed as messengers, *pro hac vice*. These gentry made a great show of being enthusiastically busy when a note had to be taken into the next street, or the returns of a canvasser were to be sent for. In the general way they did nothing at all but look out for some one who was prepared to "treat" them for the good of the cause. Upstairs there were a good many persons who were scarcely more useful, but who looked upon themselves as the pillars of the "party." All the pillars found it necessary to have recourse to constant refreshment, in the forms of sherry, brandy-and-water, and liquors equally sustaining. Most of them felt it indispensable in addition, to smoke cigars—it was an opportunity not to be lost, for everything went down in the bill, and nobody except the proud and happy candidate would be one penny the worse. So these worthies smoked and drank, and looked wise, and called the waiters by their Christian names, and altogether became wiser and more and more disposed to keep their seats as the day advanced. In another and a larger apartment sat the paid agent of the candidate, dictating letters, issuing instructions, verifying returns and directing the labours of a small army of clerks seated round a horse-shoe desk, constructed for the occasion. In yet another room, jealously guarded, sat the candidate himself, with a few of his most prominent supporters, chief among them Alderman Chadwick. This was a sacred chamber, and could not easily be approached by common humanity. There was a man outside in the rain who had tried in vain to effect an entrance; he was baffled by waiters, warned off by messengers, and even sworn at by one excited leader of the party,

to whom he applied for an audience. This man was Ned Gill. He went away now and again, but only to return and haunt the portals of the hotel. Cabs drew up and drove off again. People of all sorts hurried in and out, but not the one person whom Gill wanted to see. Nevertheless he still lingered, unwilling to deliver by other hands than his own the missive, and the inclosure which involved such important issues.

Morning developed into afternoon ; afternoon merged into evening, and still Gill kept his post of observation. The bustle had abated now to some extent. A good many of the loafing messengers had dispersed. Those who went into the hotel, intent on matters political, remained for longer periods, yielding to the allurements of things social. At length, when the watcher was beginning to despair, his patience was rewarded. The tall figure of George Martindale came down the stairs, and through the vestibule. He was unattended, and, as he reached the street pavement, his late lodge-keeper shuffled forward with a clumsy salute, and thrust the letter into his hand. Martindale took it mechanically ; he had been constantly having correspondence pressed upon him of late, and he took it for granted that this was something of the familiar type. He put the letter into his pocket, without even glancing at the address or at the person who had handed it to him ; and, disconcerted by his abstracted manner, Gill shrank back out of his path. His courage, too, failed him at the moment. He hardly knew in what light his appeal would be regarded, but he did realize thoroughly, in a half-intelligent way, that he was dealing with edged tools. Perhaps, indeed, he was thankful that no immediate conversation was brought about. An answer must, of necessity, come to such a communication, but he was not anxious to receive it on the spot. There was, moreover, something in his late employer's look which puzzled him. A lamp had shone full upon him as he had passed into the street, showing a face strangely white and weary—a face wearing a dazed look, which had not passed unnoticed by other persons throughout that day. Even at that moment, Alderman Chadwick and one or two others were discussing the conduct and manner of their candidate in the inner sanctum which he had left. These worthy men

shrugged their shoulders, and felt themselves personally aggrieved by the turn which affairs had taken.

"I tell you what," said one of them, dropping his voice, "putting two and two together—and I wouldn't say it out of the room—it makes one deuced suspicious."

"Nonsense, nonsense," said the Alderman, looking round apprehensively, but his tone lacked conviction, and unintentionally encouraged the other to go on.

"Well, you know, a man of the world can't shut his eyes to the kind of thing that has been rumoured ; these stories, for instance, could hardly have got about unless there were some kind of foundation for them."

The Alderman, who had just dined, shook his head with a movement which left it as an open question whether he intended to express his own doubt in the matter, to deprecate the suggestion of doubt by anybody else.

"And I can tell you something more," his friend went on, "that man who is charged with attacking and robbing this fellow, Munns, was only released from prison yesterday on bail, and for hours he has been hanging about this place to-day, asking for Martindale. I saw the rascal myself, and offered to bring up a letter, or a message, or whatever he wanted to send, but he refused. Do you mean to say there is not something peculiar about that?"

The loyal Alderman evaded the question.

"What we have got to do," he said, "is not to trouble about things that don't really concern us, but to try and win the election, which does concern us, and every one else who has the cause at 'art."

"That is all very well," retorted the other, but we want to have confidence in our candidate as well as our cause, and thanks to the turn things have taken, we don't stand to win."

"Who says we don't?" demanded the Alderman with some asperity.

"Well hang it! you need not fly at a man, Alderman," was the response, "If it comes to that, though I don't like betting against my own side, I'll give two to one in five pound notes that we are not at the head of the poll to-morrow."

"I will take it," said the Alderman firmly; but his tone belied him, for even at the moment, he was inclined to think that he was a fool for his pains.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE EVE OF THE ELECTION.

ONCE clear of the hotel, George Martindale walked down the street at a rapid pace. Persons might have thought, and, in fact, some did think, that he was bound upon some important errand and was pressed for time. In reality he had not made up his mind whither he was going, or what he should do. His one object was to get clear of the political supporters who had been pressing their counsel and opinions upon his notice throughout the greater part of the day. The little room in which he had been engaged had at length become intolerable to him. His head ached as if it must burst; his nerves were so highly strung that he feared he might be betrayed into some unpardonable outburst of irritation or disgust. Making some hurried excuse he had seized his hat and left the room, promising to return again ere he went back to Blatherwick Park for the night.

He had forgotten that he was an object of interest to the inhabitants, but he presently became aware that he was attracting more notice than he desired. Finding this, he turned aside beneath an ancient archway, and passed into the solitary and dimly lighted precincts of the cathedral. He walked on to the west door of the cathedral itself, and entered. The chill air of the great building struck soothingly upon his heated brow. He sat down with a sense of relief and listened to the evening service, which was proceeding behind the great stone screen which hid clergy, choir, and congregation from his view. A priestly voice reached the end of a prayer, and the "amen" swelled in a rich volume of sound throughout the long-drawn aisles, and echoed far amongst the

dim arches overhead. Then came a few mighty chords from the organ, and with a burst of praise the voices of the choir rose with the anthem for the day. Presently the surging sounds were subdued, and one voice alone, a boy's voice, excellently sweet and clear, rose above the rest. Once more the priestly voice was heard in dull monotone, a hymn was sung, and the service was at an end. The doors opened, the light streamed outwards, and the procession of clergy and choristers passed into the shadows of the solemn aisles. But the organist still remained, and the grand music of the king of instruments rushed in floods of sound throughout the building; then it sank into slow notes of pathetic cadence, again to break triumphantly into swelling and majestic tones.

Martindale sat in the shadow, hardly conscious of what was occurring, and yet strangely moved. He had forgotten the present, with all its complications and entanglements. Old memories, long-slumbering, were awaking within him. He found his mind dwelling on trifling events which had happened years and years ago. He thought of some such service which he had heard as a lad in his mother's lifetime, when with her at a cathedral on the continent. Then his thoughts passed to the time and circumstances of his mother's death; his own grief and misery, which had seemed then a lasting heritage, but which had, in reality, so soon faded away. Much had happened since then. He had lived as most men live, not worse, certainly not much better. He had lived to win the love of women, or, at least, of one; lived to be rich, a popular candidate for political honours;—lived to find that he had lost his self-respect, and that he was, as he believed now, one of the most miserable men on the face of the broad earth.

He found his lips almost shaping the words which his thoughts had conjured up. He found, to his surprise, that hot tears had come into his eyes. He rose hastily, angrily. He had been sitting there mooning and dreaming long enough. What was this absurd weakness that had taken hold of him? The organist had ceased to play. The lights were nearly all extinguished, and he saw that an inquiring verger was approaching, no doubt with the intention of telling him that the cathedral was about to be closed for the night. He went quickly down the aisle and out into the air once more. Then

he suddenly remembered the letter which he had thrust into his pocket. He took it out and opened it. Standing beneath a lamp, he read and re-read Gill's epistle ; then, with trembling fingers, turned to the enclosure upon which so much depended.

He did not read this more than once ; indeed he scarcely read it through. Considered by the light of the Major's disclosures, its meaning came home swiftly to his mind, and he was enabled rapidly to grasp its value and effect. For the moment he was conscious of a sense of relief and self-congratulation ; perhaps the feeling remained, but if so it was for a different and a more worthy reason. A selfish impulse merged into one of generosity, and he looked upwards to the star-studded sky with perhaps a nobler resolution than he had formed in his whole life until that moment. Then the full consciousness of the embarrassing net-work of circumstances, in which this revelations till further involved him, came home to his mind, and there followed a sickening sense of doubt in himself and his own power to steer his course a-right. He looked round hastily to see if any one had been observing him, and then thrust the papers into his pocket. Trees, railings, flag-stones, and lamps seemed to be dancing round him, as if to be in keeping with the whirl within his brain. He leaned against the lamp for support ; but in a few seconds recovered, in a measure, his self-control. He knew more of himself than in former days ; and he realised now that it would be well and wise to act with promptness upon his better impulse ; to put it out of his own power to follow worse instincts or darker counsels. Pressing his hat upon his brow, he went towards the row of houses not far distant, in which Mr. Croft both lived and had his offices. The windows were dark. He knocked and rang, and, after some delay, a woman came to the door. From her he learnt that Mr. Croft had gone to London. He turned wearily from the door, and went back to the lamp-lit streets of the town. At the hotel entrance his carriage was waiting—a phaeton drawn by a pair of restive horses. He had forgotten the hour at which he had ordered it ; but it relieved him now to think that he had an excuse for not going back into the presence of his officious supporters in the close little room up-stairs.

There were two or three men standing about the entrance. One of them lifted his hat as the Conservative candidate came up.

"Going home early, sir? Quite right. You'll have a trying day of it to-morrow, and I wish you luck," he said.

The words sounded strangely in George Martindale's ears. He answered something mechanically, as he took the reins from the groom and mounted to his seat. Something more was said; probably a "good-night;" he scarcely knew; there was, or seemed to be, such a singing, humming sound filling the air. He caught a glimpse of Alderman Chadwick coming down the stairs, and making a gesture as if to induce him to wait. He did not wait. There was a sharp cut with the whip, and the horses, in obedience, dashed down the street at a pace which made the passers-by stop with amazement. Even the groom, with folded arms, and wrapped in respectful silence, felt surprise, and gradually surprise deepened into anxiety. He muttered something to himself about "coming to grief!" He felt a little easier when they had cleared the town, and reached the open country road, where there was little or no traffic at that time of the evening. But his anxiety returned when, urged by their driver, the horses sprang forward in a manner which almost shook him from his seat.

"Why can't he let the blessed whip alone?" he said, almost aloud this time.

Once more the whip was resorted to, and the irritated animals broke into a gallop. The duty of self-preservation, and a conviction that there was something wrong, induced the groom to break through precedent. He grasped the hood and stood up.

"I'm thinking we shall get into trouble. Shall I take the reins, sir?" he asked.

"Sit down!" answered Martindale, hoarsely.

By this time they were dashing along the road at a terrific pace. The hedges seemed to fly behind them. Presently the wide heath stretched out before them in the starlight. The horses were now beyond control. There was nothing to prevent their dashing across the uneven ground which lay on either side. As yet, however, they kept the road. Fifty yards a-head it took a sharp turn, the angle being marked by a large stone.

The groom, with a sort of swift prevision, had this stone before him some seconds before it was actually in sight.

"Have mercy upon us! We're done for!" he exclaimed through his clenched teeth. The words were prophetic. There was a rapid swirl to one side, the forewheel crashed against the stone, the carriage heeled over, and in a second, master and man lay senseless and bleeding on the other side of the road, whilst the maddened horses tore onward, with the wreck of the carriage at their heels. For some moments the two men lay inert beneath the stars. Then the groom, who had been only stunned and bruised, sat up. In a half dazed fashion he went to his master, and bent over him.

Martindale lay perfectly still, and the blood from a wound in his head was forming a pool round his white face. The man started back in terror. He thought that he was looking upon death. He looked wildly round for assistance. Two lights were seen approaching from the direction of Hexbury. They drew nearer and nearer, and in a few moments, attracted by the shout he gave, the vehicle to which they belonged drew up a few paces away. It proved to be a cab from the railway-station at Hexbury. The driver got down from his seat, and some one opened the cab-door and sprang out.

The driver of the cab was old and stiff, but the man whom he had been driving was young and active. In a moment he was bending over the injured man, and recognised his features with an exclamation of surprise.

"It's a bad job, I'm afeard; what are we to do?" said the groom, in subdued tones.

"We must take him to the next house," answered Jim Travers; for it was he. Then he glanced forward to see where the nearest house lay. Wick Heath Academy was the only habitation at hand, and, with a strange pang, a sharp sense of hardship, Jim decided that Martindale must be taken there.

There seemed to be a fatality in this necessity, which convinced him almost in that moment that his dreaded, hoped-for visit, would only end in heart-sickness and disappointment. The next moment he tried to drive away all selfish considerations. He made up his mind rapidly.

"The cab cannot help us," he said. "You are strong, and between us we can carry him to that house."

Then he hurriedly gave instructions to the cabman to drive back to Hexbury, and bring a surgeon as fast as the horse would travel. The man clambered back to his seat and drove off in obedience.

Martindale was breathing heavily now. The blood was still flowing from the wound in his head. This latter Jim bound up hastily with his handkerchief, and the two men then lifted the helpless form as gently as they could, and bore it towards Dr. Singleton's.

Hicks came to the door in answer to the summons, and started back, panting and dismayed, as he saw the burden the two were carrying.

Jim whispered a few words of explanation, founded upon such facts as he had hastily gathered from the groom.

The sitting-room door was ajar—the door of the same room in which Grace had sat on the evening of her arrival—she sat there now, working by the fireside. The unwonted sounds in the passage outside attracted her attention. The hurried, though subdued words—the heavy footsteps, and the housekeeper's exclamations—conveyed to her in an instant a conviction that trouble and misfortune were at hand, if not death itself.

She sprang to her feet and flung back the door. Her eyes met Jim's, then she saw the apparently lifeless form he was helping to support. Her face blanched, and she gave a short gasp for breath, but she showed no other signs of emotion. With swift woman's wit, she grasped the situation in all essential points, but forbore from woman's usual flood of questions. It was a time for deeds not words.

They laid Martindale upon the sofa, and applied such restoratives as were ready at hand. The simple remedies resorted to were unavailing. He still remained insensible, and each one present counted the moments until the doctor should arrive.

At length came the welcome sound of wheels upon the road. Hicks had gone to the kitchen for fresh bandages, and the groom ran hastily to the door.

In that moment Jim Travers learnt, better than words could

tell him, that he had come from London on a bootless errand. He was standing upon the hearthrug, and Grace was kneeling by Martindale's side, with her back towards the fire. Hearing the footsteps hurry to the door, she thought there was no one present save herself and the man to whom her first and last love had been unalterably given. With a convulsive sob of mingled passion and anguish, she bent over and kissed the face lying drawn and white upon the pillow. Then she swiftly rose, and turned to meet the surgeon, who came hurrying in. She thought that Jim had entered with him, and she thought so to the last. Jim never let her know that he had witnessed that despairing act, which left no room for doubt that, so far as hopes of winning Grace Summer were concerned, his fate was sealed. After a few words, Grace left the room, and waited in the passage for the doctor's verdict. Presently he came out hurriedly to call for something that was needed.

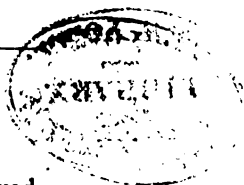
The girl met him on the threshold.

"Will he die?" she asked, in trembling tones.

"I don't say that, but his life is in danger," was the answer.

(To be continued.)

TO JESSIE.



THE apple of gold on one was bestowed
Ere you, fairest maiden, were nigh.
And if now she arose from her couch of repose,
She'd melt at one glance of your eye!

Of roses they speak; I look on your cheek,
There roses are blooming in snow.
The violet's blue is your eye's dazzling hue,
No lovelier blossoms I know.

No poet could find a theme more divine,
Than you, in your beauty alone.
The sun, shining gold, seems to bid us behold
Diana and Hebe in one!

MARK CROSS.



THOMAS CAMPBELL.

THE youngest of eleven children, Thomas Campbell was born in Glasgow, July 27, 1777. His father had had a large business in Virginia, but it was ruined by the American war, and at the birth of his son he was living retired. He managed, however, to give him a good education. At the age of eight he was sent to the Grammar School, where he was noticed by David Alison as a most promising boy. He made good progress in classics, especially in Greek. So diligent was he that his health failed, and he was sent to a village on the Cart, where the thorough change, and the abandonment of his studies, soon restored him to good health. At the age of twelve he entered the University, where he worked hard. For his translations from Greek into English verse he gained prize after prize. One of these translations was pronounced by a tutor to be the finest ever submitted for examination at the University. His affectionate nature, genial sociability, and ready wit made him a great favourite with the students generally. He was very clever at writing Latin epigrams. It is related that on a cold winter morning, when the little fellow could not get to the stove for the press of big Irish lads, he stuck a piece of paper on the door, with the following lines written on it :—

“ Vos Hiberni collocatis
Summum bonum in—potatoes ! ”

When somebody noticed it a rush was made to the door, and Campbell took a comfortable position by the stove. In the summer of 1795 he took a private tutorship in Mull. Here he led a lonely and melancholy life, but the wild beauty of the island and the sea impressed his imagination,

and he stored up images of beauty which he afterwards touched into life. A rock, where he often sat, still retains the name of the "Poet's Seat." In the winter he returned to the University, and closed his brilliant career by winning two prizes more.

Campbell's poetical genius dawned early. At the Grammar School the translations, written by most in prose, were by him always made in verse, and at the University, as we have seen, he far outstripped everybody. One of his earliest attempts at original verse is an ode to a departed parrot; another celebrates his joy at the approaching vacation; another is addressed to his sister Mary, who remonstrated with him for celebrating dead parrots rather than his dear sisters; another, written a year or two after, relates the defeat of a confident youth at the *Pons Asinorum*, the class being compared to a troop of Hussars, and the youth coming to grief on the bridge; another, a request for a holiday, skilfully inserted in the "Tutor's Text-book" on some festive occasion, gained it, when all the other students had given up the hope of it in despair; another is a sweet hymn on the "Nativity." In satirical verse, too, he excelled. It is related that a certain debating club refused to hold a debate with another, the "Discursive," to which Campbell belonged, as the latter consisted of young and untrained spirits. They had cause to regret their refusal, for in a few days, says a student, the whole college was ringing with some satirical lines of Tom Campbell. In his second year at college, a poem on "Description," a spirited account of the distribution of prizes there secured him one. When the news of the execution of Marie Antoinette reached Scotland he wrote some verses that appeared in the newspaper. So highly, indeed, was his poetical talent esteemed that, after one of his favourites, he was called the Pope of Glasgow.

On leaving college he became tutor in the house of General Napier, where he wrote some of his minor poems, still printed in his "Works." His future course was uncertain. At one time he had thought of the Church, but abandoned the idea. In 1793 he was in the office of a relative, a Writer to the Signet, but found that too dull. He thought of the Bar, and for one or two sessions attended Lectures on Law, but the

expense of this was too great. For several years he had it in his mind to go out to Virginia, where his brothers were still trading. He was on the point of starting more than once ; when he found that he could not go at all his disappointment was great.

In 1798 he came to Edinburgh, and was introduced to Dr. Anderson, who, seeing some of his poetry, was so struck with it, that he recommended him to Mr. Mundell, the publisher. By task work for him, and by taking pupils, Campbell got a livelihood. Meanwhile, the "*Pleasures of Hope*," the idea of which was suggested to Campbell by a friend in Mull, was advancing rapidly. He found many kind friends, Richardson, Brougham, his aunt, Mrs. Campbell, and her lovely daughter Mary. All of these cheered him in his work, and, where they could, gave him advice and help. In due time the poem was finished, and Dr. Anderson took it to Mr. Mundell, who offered £60 for it. It appeared, and Campbell found that by this one performance alone he had obtained no mean niche in the temple of fame. In one year it ran through four editions, for each of which Campbell received £50. The splendour of the poem and the youth of the poet made an indelible impression on the public, and secured for him many good friends. It is related of Dr. Gregory, of Edinburgh, that, being at a bookseller's one morning, he took up the new book, saying, "What's this?" opened it, and did not move till he had read the first part. On finishing this he asked excitedly for the author, saying, "I will call upon him at once." He did so, and ever after proved a trusty and valued friend. Scott, with his usual generosity, heartily welcomed his brother bard, and Telford, Dugald Stewart, Erskine, and Alison, all became Campbell's friends.

He now began to feel the want of travel, and accordingly left Scotland for Germany. After a short stay at Hamburg, he went on to Ratisbon. Three days afterwards this was taken by the French ; Campbell took refuge with the Scotch monks of the Benedictine College. Here he witnessed a charge of German horse upon the French. This, and the like scenes, made an impression upon his mind that was the forerunner of *Hohenlinden* and his other martial poems. The state of Europe was so troubled that he hurried home as soon

as he could get a passport. At Hamburg he met Anthony McCann, exiled for the Irish rebellion of 1798, and, moved by his misfortunes, Campbell wrote the touching "Exile of Erin." From London, where he landed, he was suddenly called to Edinburgh by the tidings of his father's death. Arrived here he found himself charged with treason. He at once demanded a full investigation, and cleared himself at once. While under suspicion, his papers were seized, and among them was the splendid lyric, "Ye Mariners of England." So patriotic was its tone, that the Sheriff was at once convinced of his innocence.

In 1802 Campbell married his cousin, Miss Matilda Sinclair, and went to live at Sydenham. This was then a lovely spot, and his reputation having preceded him, he found the residents there ready to receive him cordially. He became much attached to the place, and looked back upon his seventeen years' life there as one of "the greenest spots in memory's waste." In his wife he found a faithful helpmate, who did her utmost to rouse him from the periodic depression into which anxiety about money and delicate health often plunged him. A young cousin who spent some time there tells how careful Mrs. Campbell was to prevent his being disturbed, and how she would leave the door of his room slightly open, so that she could see how he was progressing in his work. On one occasion she called her young friend to look at him in a moment of inspiration; his pen was in his hand, his eyes uplifted, his face lit up with rapture. They stole behind his chair, and then left him, quite unconscious they had entered his room. By contributions to the *Star*, which brought him four guineas a week, to the *Philosophical Magazine*, and other periodicals, he maintained not only himself, but his mother and sister, who, since his father's death, had been entirely dependent upon him and his brother. It was an anxious time, but in 1805 he received a pension of £200 a year from the Crown, during the Government of Mr. Fox. Of this he kept only a half for himself, the other regularly went to his mother. Later on a Highland relation, in consideration of his generosity on this occasion, bequeathed him £5,000.

Campbell now engaged to lecture at the Royal Institution on English Poetry. In these lectures he did not confine him-

self to English, but touched on the poetry of all nations, including the Orientals. Their success was extraordinary; the room was crowded; his critical acumen, splendid imagery, and refined taste were well appreciated. After this he got into a round of fashionable entertainments, meeting the highest society in the land. After a visit to Paris he was requested to deliver his lectures in Liverpool. The effect produced upon his audience, consisting of the *élite* of the town, was very great, and his prose was pronounced to be even more poetic than his verse. While speaking of Apollo he described the feelings he had when he saw Apollo Belvidere at the Louvre, a sight that had produced the deepest impression upon his mind. The effect was electric, and, says one of the audience, "in poetical conception and felicitous expression we never saw [or heard anything comparable to the description of Mr. Campbell." On the journey back to London he delivered the lectures at Birmingham. Weakness of the chest prevented their delivery elsewhere.

In 1820, after a visit to Germany, he took the editorship of the *New Monthly Magazine*. He engaged to furnish twelve articles himself, six in prose and six in poetry. In return he was to have a salary of £500 a year, and a sub-editor. By writing to his friends he soon secured a good staff, and then he threw himself with ardour into the work. He identified his own reputation with that of the magazine, which soon obtained a place among the first of the day. Campbell's sympathetic nature was often touched by those who were compelled, by poverty or affliction, to write for their bread. In cases like these his critical faculties, good as they were, were often disarmed by his tender feelings. For ten years he continued this work. At the end of that time he edited the *Metropolitan*. In this appeared, in 1834, his letters from the south, written during his travels in France, Germany, and Algiers.

"The only important event in his life's little history" (to quote his own words), was the founding of London University. The idea, especially since his return from Germany, had strongly impressed his mind. In conversation with friends it was well received, and at last the matter came before the public. Brougham, Hume, Mill, and John Smith worked

zealously ; religious difficulties, and the want of funds, seemed to threaten destruction to the scheme, but its promoters worked steadily on, and at length had the satisfaction of seeing the University fairly established. This was not his only service to the cause of learning. In 1826, after a hotly contested election, he was appointed Lord Rector of his own University. The enthusiasm of the students, who remembered he had once been one of them, in his favour was intense. His Liberal opinions, however, were not pleasing to the Professors. Once elected he gave them no cause for regret, and so well did he fulfil his duties that he was re-elected for the two following years. He reformed abuses, gave the students their full rights, exercised a wholesome discipline, fostered rising genius, and in all the classes instituted a spirit of inquiry and diligence such as had rarely existed before. With the students he was immensely popular. His geniality, his freedom of intercourse with them, and their admiration for his genius, made him the "Good Lord Rector," and induced some of them to found a Campbell Club.

Through these changing scenes much trouble had fallen upon him. He had realised, to the full, the anxiety of a life dependent on literature. Latterly, however, he became prosperous. A friend of his tells the following story. On Campbell's asking one day for some information about Welsh habits, he mentioned that of talking in triads. He said he knew an old Welsh harper, and one night, passing a wild and desolate spot, he met the old man the picture of grief. He asked the cause, and the man said, pathetically, "My wife is dead, my son is mad, my harp is unstrung." Instantaneously Campbell started and burst into tears. The old harper's words might have been his own. His wife had recently died, his son was in an asylum, and the popularity given to his early works was not given now. Besides, he had some time before lost his second child, and he could rarely speak of him without emotion.

In 1824 he published "Theodore." He thought that this would disappoint at first, but maintain a steady popularity afterwards. He was mistaken ; it was not well received at all. Nor did the "Pilgrim of Glencoe," published in 1842, achieve any better success. Several of his prose works had already

appeared. His "Specimens of the British Poets" was eagerly waited for, and well received. The "Annals of Great Britain, from the Accession of George III. to the Peace of Amiens," appeared anonymously. He wrote "Lives of Petrarch" and "Mrs. Siddons," and edited many other works.

In 1842 he removed from London, where he resided while he edited the *New Monthly*, and went to Boulogne. He was accompanied by his niece, who remained with him to the last. For a time he spent the mornings in writing "Lectures on Classical Geography," chiefly for her. Soon he abandoned that, and was confined to his library, where sometimes in the long evenings his genial humour and pleasant wit shone out in fitful gleams. His favourite authors were read to him, and his favourite music sung. The song he loved best was the "Marseillaise," which he had first heard at Ratisbon in his early manhood. He was confined to his bed for a fortnight before his death, very weak, and sometimes in great pain. Doubtful whether he were conscious, his friends affected not to know the author of "Hohenlinden," and one of them hazarded Robinson. "No," said the old man, slowly and distinctly, "it was one Tom Campbell," and fell back again, silent. The service for the sick he found very "soothing," and among his last words were, "Let us sing praises to Christ." Thus the hours slipped by, the sun shone down peacefully through the tall elms outside, the sea breeze fluttered the leaves, and within sight and hearing of that nature he so much loved, on the 15th of June, 1844, his head dropped on his breast, his soul—

"O'er the path by mortal never trod,
Sprung to her source, the bosom of her God."

On the anniversary of Waterloo, his nurse, a soldier's widow, laid a wreath of laurel and evergreens upon the brow of the martial poet, and scattered the "darling wild flowers, the wildings of June," upon his coffin. Thus he was brought to England, and in the presence of the greatest political and literary celebrities, he was laid to rest in the sacred dust of Westminster Abbey.

Campbell's disposition was singularly winning. For all his relatives he cherished the deepest affection. As a friend he was constant, confiding, and true. For mankind in general

he had a wide-reaching charity, and for their troubles the tenderest sympathy. He was generous in the extreme, and his generosity was often accompanied by the finest delicacy. He was somewhat excitable, and his temper occasionally got the mastery of him. He had a rich humour and a ready wit, which, when excited by conversation, flashed out brilliantly. In his youth his face and figure were very handsome. Though rather small, "his features were regular," says Leigh Hunt, "his eye lively and penetrating, and when he spoke, dimples played around his mouth, which, nevertheless, had something restrained and close about it."

Campbell's warm, sympathetic heart continually appears in his poetry. It enables him to enter in thoroughly to men's real feelings and describe them truthfully. To the storm-beaten sailor, to the watching mother, to the self-deceived maniac, he speaks with keen appreciation of their feelings, and bids them look at the bright pictures of hope he is painting before their eyes. He early adopted strongly-marked and strongly-felt Liberal opinions. To those struggling for liberty, whether Greeks or Poles, Spaniards or slaves, he gives the warmest sympathy of his heart, and the best aid of his pen. For this reason, too, his own patriotism is enthusiastic, and he gives it a glorious vent in "Ye Mariners of England."

A true poet, he has a powerful command over the feelings; both in passion and pathos his verse excels. Several passages in "The Pleasures of Hope" are good examples of the former, the references to the Poles and the slaves perhaps the best. But in "Lochiel's Warning" the wizard's eye shines with the glare of fury, and the verse boils with passion. In pathos he is even more successful. The pictures of a retired life, and the episode of *Conrad* and *Ellenore*, from "The Pleasures of Hope" are very tender in their tone; but it reaches his highest pitch in his later works. "Gertrude of Wyoming" has a gentle pathos throughout, and particularly *Gertrude's* farewell. The lines to the "Evening Star," the "Exile of Erin," and, above all, the sad story of the "O'Connor's Child" have a depth of feeling as rich as rare.

"The Pleasures of Hope" was written with a youthful enthusiasm, in a stately yet often impassioned rhetoric, and frequently in true sublimity. *Gertrude* shows much more

feeling, has a good delineation of character—witness the stoical *Outalissi*, for instance—and contains some of Campbell's brightest gems. Yet it was felt generally that these were not the richest fruits of his genius. These are to be found—and but too sparingly—in his minor poems.

Of these, the two naval odes, the "Battle of the Baltic," so simple, yet so sublime, and "Ye Mariners of England," so patriotic, so melodious, and so confident, are among the finest in the language. "Hohenlinden" is a splendid example of our war-poetry, the verse smooth and still as the "untrodden snow," then, like the hills, shaken with the thunder and reeling with the intoxication of the fight, and then flowing gently down by soldiers' sepulchres, at rest once more. The "Last Man" is a bold and striking conception, far above Campbell's average, yet he rises to it with the utmost facility. The description of the wasted earth recalls parts of the "Ancient Mariner," the rest stands alone, unlike anyone.

Of quite a different character is another class of his poetry—meditative and contemplative. The best examples of this are his lines on revisiting a scene in Argyllshire, those on leaving Bavaria, and those to the sea, written at St. Leonards. It is said that being asked what he considered the best of his poems, to the surprise of his questioner he mentioned this last. All are written in a quiet and noble feeling, as thoroughly in sympathy with the scenes the poet is describing as the spirit of Wordsworth.

A number of pretty little songs, many of them set to music, two or three ballad pieces, excellent of their kind, of which "Lord Ullin's Daughter" is the simplest and the best; the beautiful lines to the "Rainbow," and verses written for various festive occasions. These and some others complete Campbell's works.

But varied as these are, all are marked by the same careful polishing. His enthusiasm, hot as it is, is always reined in by his taste. Stormy and turbulent as his feelings were they were always under control. Often there is a whirlwind, but it is angel-guided. Nothing was suffered to go to print without continued revision. We are told that he returned in a most excited state to the house where he had written the

stanzas to "Florine" to substitute a single word, and, having done it, went off at once contented. The fear of a misprint in the morning, we are told, would disturb his night's rest. This excessive care, with the amount of task work he did for publishers is, doubtless, the reason that his works are comparatively so few. It is, doubtless, too, the reason of his felicitous expression, certain phrases fastening on the memory with magical effect, and passing into proverbs at once.

An interesting story is told in connection with one of these. While the idea of "Lochiel" was floating in his mind, he awoke one night at Lord Minto's, where he was staying, with the words on his lips—"Events to come cast their shadow before." He rang loudly, and to the astonished servant's question, "Was he well?" he replied, "Never better in my life," and called for a cup of tea and a light. They were brought, and there and then he wrote down the words as they now stand, and a rough draft of "Lochiel."

We have already assigned a reason for the fewness of Campbell's works, but we cannot help thinking that the success of "The Pleasures of Hope" cast a shadow over his life, and made him very mistrustful of risking his reputation. In early life he planned an epic, but as years went by the idea was abandoned. Still, he has written quite enough to secure himself a foremost place amongst English classics, and, so far as his poetical talents were used at all, they were used with diligence and deserved success.

EDWARD LESTER.





DOUBLE ACROSTIC, No. 2.

IF you guess wrong I answer *this* ;
'Tis *both* if either "light" you miss.
To help you—if you're good at names—
Think of a fort upon the Thames.

I.

Marry in haste to repent at leisure,
And this will be your chief conjugal pleasure.

II.

A dreary night when the weird wind blew ;
A youth who ate too much ;
And a chapel door that open flew
At *his* cherished relic's touch.

LUGANO.

SOLUTION OF DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. I.

N o X
O p i u M
E m m A
L e t t e r S

Correct answers received from :—Dowager—Shark—Two
Cockneys—Artemisia—Nemo—Coup d'Essai—Tatters—
Miserere—Quite a Young Thing too—P. V.—Beolne—S. P. E.
—Brevette—Black Beetle—Nursery—Belle Alliance—and
Chamione ; 17 correct and 97 incorrect—total, 114.

Attention is called to Rule VII., which must be strictly
observed in future.



MESOSTICH, No. 2.

'TIS said that in a certain measure
Even pain can give us pleasure.

I.

If climbing mountains forms your bliss.
Be sure to have a *stock* of this.

II.

Dearly loved the captain's daughter,
The gallant youth who "ploughed" the water.

III.

On this all may go well,
With prudence, lamp and bell.

IV.

What the Darkie gaily rings,
When at St. James's Hall he sings.

V.

Quick, find a spouse, my pretty miss,
Or you will find yourself on this.

COMO.

SOLUTION OF MESOSTICH NO. I.

a	N	d
s	E	a
e	W	e
r	Y	e
p	E	n
sh	A	me
a	R	t

Correct answers received from :—Quite a Young Thing too—What, Never ?—Shark—Black Currant—and Peddie. 5 correct, and 122 incorrect—total, 127.

Light, No. 6, has baffled many solvers. The meaning is, however, quite obvious. Cowards fear only *danger* and laugh at *shame*.

ACROSTIC AND MESOSTICH RULES.

I.—Each number of the *St. James's Magazine* will contain a Double Acrostic and a Mesostich.

II.—In *each* competition Three Annual Prizes, in money (1st prize twenty-five guineas, 2nd prize ten guineas, 3rd prize five guineas), will be awarded to the three most successful solvers.

III.—Special competitions will be held for guessing off ties (if any).

IV.—Prize-winners will be required to furnish their names and addresses for publication.

V.—The same solver may win prizes in both competitions.

VI.—Only *one* word can be accepted as the solution of each light.

VII.—Answers addressed to "The Acrostic Editor," 5, Friar Street, Ludgate Hill, E.C., must be posted in time to be received by the first post on the 10th of each month, or on the 11th, if the 10th falls on a Sunday.

VIII.—In accordance with the wishes of numerous Subscribers, the Acrostics and Mesostiches for March, June, September and December will be in French.

St. James's Magazine.

MARCH, 1879.

WHAT WILL SOCIETY SAY

A NOVEL.

BY MERVYN MERRITON,

Author of "Romances of the Chivalric Ages," "The Ring-woods of Ringwood," &c., &c.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE IS twelve months' engagement concluded, Frank Aylesmere found himself in possession of between five and six hundred pounds.

Among the members of the troupe brought together by the Northern manager was a remarkable individual named Screesman (familiarily known as old Screezy), of moderate ability as an actor, but great capacity for organisation, added to considerable financial knowledge obtained in the Manchester cotton broker's office in which he had commenced life. His person and address were good, and his manners attractive. In short, Charles Screesman was a man who might have done well in the world but for one unhappy failing. His sobriety was never to be relied on under conditions of the smallest temptation. He was, to be sure, so far aware of his weakness in this respect, that, if left to himself, he contrived to keep out of temptation whenever he felt that the consequences of yielding to it were likely to be more than commonly serious. But as men afflicted with this disease—for the inordinate love of drink really amounts to a disease of a terrible nature—are invariably accessible to external in-

fluence, it rarely happened that his knowledge of his infirmity availed him much.

Screezman's experience of the stage and all appertaining to it was very great. He had entered upon his career at twenty-five, and he was now sixty-three. Though, as has been said, not much of an actor himself, his long experience had given him an insight into the merits of other actors which was rarely at fault. He had from the first approved the engagement and predicted the success of Mr. Philip Francis ; moreover, he had subsequently been at much trouble to give the young artist useful hints founded upon his knowledge of stage tradition, he having himself played secondary parts with Edmund Kean and Charles Kemble, besides having been stage-manager to the performances of Macready and the younger Kean. He was a man whose society Frank had sought rather than—as in too many other cases among his fellow actors—carefully shunned. When sober, Screezman was a gentlemanly and well-informed companion ; even in his cups he was good tempered, humorous, and never quarrelsome.

The relations of the two by degrees became intimate, and both being solitary men (Screezman was a widower, and without children), they had taken up their abode together. One evening, shortly before the termination of the year's engagement, when there was no performance at the theatre, as they sat together after luxuriating in a six o'clock dinner—their usual hour being four—Screezman asked Frank whether he had yet made any professional plans for the future.

Frank replied in the negative.

"Are you going to London from this?"

"Yes ; but with no idea of appearing there yet."

"Are you disposed for a little business on your own account?"

"How on my own account?"

"Humph ! you've got a few hundreds."

"I have"—laughing—"and I should like to keep them."

"Or quadruple them !"

"Well, I should prefer the latter, but——"

"But me no buts, Francis, but just listen to what I am going to say."

What Screesman was going to say, and did say, amounted to a proposal that a small but efficient tragedy and high comedy company should be formed, nominally under his direction, in reality under their joint control, for the purpose of enabling Frank to "star the provinces," according to the formulary in vogue, through parts of the country in which he was not yet known. The advantages of the scheme were as obvious as the disadvantages. Frank would be enabled to play all the leading parts, and otherwise cast the pieces as he pleased. *Per contra*, should the speculation fail, his few hundreds would melt away, and he be left to get them back as well as he might. He was of a sanguine temperament, and he was in the full tide of success; yet he hesitated to close at once with Screesman's proposal. The truth was that he dreaded lest, in the man's too independent managerial position, he should be tempted to indulge in his fatal propensity, to the detriment of their common interest.

A single remark, addressed to a notoriously weak point of his own, sufficed to overcome his scruples.

"And then, Francis," said Screesman, rubbing his hands gleefully: "we shall have an opportunity of producing that Tragic Play!"

"By Jove! you're right," Frank eagerly exclaimed. "Screesy, it's a bargain!"

And a bargain it was—one, moreover, which in its immediate consequences proved but a sorry business for Frank Aylesmere.

I say immediate consequences, because the incident proved, after all, speaking figuratively, but a single link in the chain of his life. Now, just as each particular link of a chain follows the preceding link, so each event in every man's life is the consequence of that which preceded it, and could not have occurred but for such preceding event; so that, any man's life being given as a whole, supposing such or such particular event not to have occurred, the entire tenour of his life would have become changed and have been other than it has been.

Whatever, then, the ultimate fate reserved for Frank Aylesmere, this incident of his theatrical undertaking in conjunction with Screesman will be found to have had its share in bringing about that fate.

But let us not anticipate.

Frank had committed—among many others—one foolish act, which scores of men, and a few women, both on and off the stage, in high life and humble sphere, have committed, are committing, and will continue to commit.

He had written a Play—a Tragic Play!

This composition he had submitted to his friends and admirers. Unhappily for him, his friends and admirers, with that reckless criticism incidental to friends and admirers in general, had approved it. A few of them took the freedom to suggest this or that modification; but these suggestions, proceeding from persons, if possible, less experienced in dramatic writing than the author himself, were either impractical, or completely at variance one with the other. Consequently the puzzled author declined them all, and stuck to his own errors—errors as inevitable in the work of a young writer as they would have been palpable to any really experienced dramatist.

“Alterations and cuttings there must of course be—but quite time enough to go into them when I get the piece put upon the stage!” was the formulary with which Frank wound up his own reflections on the subject.

The difficulty of getting it put upon the stage, however, had proved insurmountable up to the time when Screesman had made the proposal aforesaid; it is, then, easy to be imagined how readily Frank's hesitation yielded before the hint touching the possible “opportunity of producing that Tragic Play!”

This opportunity was, as might be expected, made to present itself at an early period in the campaign of “Screesman's Celebrated Tragedy and Comedy Company.”

To speak the language of honest criticism, this famous composition presented a series of deplorable anti-climaxes as to its action, and was stilted and inflated in style, while such little interest as the story did possess was thrown around the one leading character, written, naturally enough, for the author himself.

The production of the piece took place in a town which we will call Oldborough, and was effected after the most approved metropolitan fashion.

Gigantic posters in flaming colours were made to announce

to the Oldborough public the first night of the new and entirely original play of absorbing interest and replete with thrilling effects, which had been for a long time in preparation. It was stated that this real work of genius, written by an anonymous author, would be supported by the entire strength of the talented company; that it was to be produced on a scale of unparalleled magnificence; that the entirely new scenery was by Messrs. A. and B., the dresses (from original designs by Mr. C.) were by Madame D., assisted by Miss E.; the properties by Mr. F.; and lastly, that the entire work was to be produced under the superintendence of Mr. Screesman, assisted by the author himself.

The house, on the first night, was what is known in theatrical parlance as "a paper house"—that is a house mainly filled by means of free admissions. The Oldborough playgoers formed in the aggregate a public by no means docile; it was a public free of its money, but no less so in the expression of its sentiments. In short, it liked to have—and small blame to it—money's worth for its money. In order, therefore, to place the question of a success beyond all doubt, the above measure formed an important element in Screesman's tactics.

The result was a series of calls for the principal actor between each of the five acts, and at the conclusion of the piece a positive ovation for the talented young author.

On the second, third, fourth, and fifth nights, portions of the genuine public were admitted in a gradually increasing ratio; and it was not till the sixth that "the greatest tragic play of modern times, 'Waldenstein; or, The Broken Spell,' " was finally abandoned to the unassisted expression of public opinion.

The real run of the piece was limited to exactly one week—not a night more; and on the Saturday concluding that week—Treasury Saturday—the fatal "My dear Mr. Francis, the public won't have your play at any price—we must put up something else, or close the theatre" of the experienced Screesman rang in Frank's ear the knell of his first, and to the best of my belief, his last dramatic production.

He had to pay smartly for his whistle. The cost of mounting the piece, on the one hand, and, on the other, the

positive loss occasioned by what was tantamount to excluding the paying public, amounted to a hundred and twenty odd pounds.

Frank would fain have tried "Waldenstein ; or, The Broken Spell" in other towns, but Screesman, convinced of the utter impossibility of "making it go" by any process whatever of cutting, condensing, or altering, persistently opposed such attempt at revival.

And now, many amusing if not edifying pages might be written descriptive of the fluctuating fortunes of Screesman's company, which, in all the advertisements, from "celebrated" was shortly promoted to "of world-wide reputation." Many details, too, might be given of Frank's frequent successes and occasional failures—his passages of arms with his professional brethren—his harmless flirtations with the leading ladies, singing chambermaids, and other dames and damsels of the troupe ; but such characteristic sketches are somewhat hackneyed in the present day of microscopic authorship, possess little interest for the general reader, and would require space, which, in the opinion of Frank's biographer, may be more usefully employed.

Screesman's darling vice was not without its effect upon the results of the campaign. Frank could not always be with or near him. Excitement, anxiety, doubtful society, and, despite his honesty, a practically irresponsible command of the treasury, all combined to throw him in drink's way and drink in his. More than once he was found to be in a state of intoxication when a call of "Manager" had been raised for him, either to appease some row before the curtain, or to apologise for some error of omission or commission behind it. Moreover, a certain laxity of managerial discipline necessarily arose out of the occasional acts of boon companionship wherein he allowed himself to indulge with those under his direction.

It was not, however, till after a series of doubtful success and actual failures in some half-a-dozen towns, that Frank perceived the necessity of urging Screesman to examine their financial position. The state of things then brought to light was that they had lost the whole of their capital, and owed a trifle over two hundred pounds.

The question hereupon raised was whether they should

bring the campaign to a close, or carry it on, as a joint-stock concern, at the risk of the company generally. Frank, never very persistent in the presence of disappointment and difficulty, was already sick of the whole affair; his health, too, had been sensibly affected by his hard work and the sense of his individual responsibilities. He voted for immediate dissolution, under his personal engagement to settle all outstanding debts within a given time. Screesman, accustomed to failures, and confident in Mr. Philip Francis' talent, took the contrary view; his opinion prevailed with the company generally, and from the monarchical, the government of Screesman's company became changed to the republican form. This was necessarily fatal to Frank's autocratic pretensions, and he was already meditating a retreat from the association when an attack of fever rendered him incapable of appearing on the stage for several nights. As soon as he felt rather better he made an effort to play a light part. In the middle of the performance he broke down, and was taken to his lodgings seriously ill. The next day Screesman telegraphed to Heartly, who came down to look after his friend, and at once determined to have him removed to London for the benefit of good medical advice.

Screesman prevailed upon the company to give their comrade a free benefit. Such appeals are never made in vain to members of this profession, among whom a free-hearted and generous sympathy is the prevailing characteristic. With sixty-five pounds, the proceeds of the night's performance, in his pocket, Frank, more dead than alive, was lifted into the train and whirled away to London. The ground-floor he had occupied in Pimlico being vacant, Heartly had him placed at once in his old bed, and sent off for a local medical man, who suggested that Dr. G——, the eminent physician, should be called in for consultation.

CHAPTER IX.

OUR scene is now laid in Abel Heartly's studio, situate, as heretofore, on the upper floor of the house to which, some six weeks ago, Frank Aylesmere was conveyed.

The young painter is working upon a picture for which he confidently hopes to gain admission to the Royal Academy next season. The subject is one often illustrated, but which, from its popularity, is always attractive when ably rendered on canvas—the famous “Yellow Stockings Scene” from “The Twelfth Night.”

He has chosen it principally because he imagines that he has under his hand three apt models for his three principal figures. These are all known to us. The original of *Malvolio* is the lean, lantern-jawed Septimus Oldham. His step-daughter, Marie Duhamel, from whom we last parted at Lentworth Hall, lends her lithe, undulating form, and bright, intellectual countenance to *Olivia*, “the virtuous maid,” who, for love of her lost brother, “hath abjured the company and sight of men.” *Sir Toby* finds a representative in the cheery François, whilom man-of-all-work to Oldham and Marie, at Boulogne, but who now appears, under his more dignified appellation of Monsieur Beaubois, as the proprietor of the house in which *ce bon Monsieur et cette chère Demoiselle* occupy the first-floor.

“And so you really think Frank much better to-day, Miss Duhamel?” Heartly says, addressing Marie, who, alone of the three, is this morning giving him an hour's *séance*.

“Indeed I do, Mr. Heartly,” is the reply, “I really expect to see him up and in his chair to-morrow.”

“Ah! a very satisfactory bulletin.”

“I consider it so, indeed, Mr. Heartly.”

“And this result will be chiefly owing to you—Nay, don't shake your head—Frank knows, as well as I myself, how much he is indebted to your nursing for his recovery. I beg your pardon, but I want your hands a little more in repose—more still—Permit me!” Here Heartly rises, and gently arranges his model's long, slender fingers after the desired fashion, in the performance of which act, any observant eye,

had such been near, might have detected a certain tremulousness in his own hand.

"You've had a long spell," Heartly continued, resuming his seat, "of your self-imposed duties—Ah! pray don't move the eye—A little more this way, if you please—Thank you—I say of your self-imposed duties of *Sœur de charité*."

"As to that," Marie said, "I shall be amply rewarded by the recovery of the—the—of my patient, as you call Mr. Aylesmere." And the animation she was unable to restrain while speaking, not only betrayed her interest in her subject, but once more carried her eyes out of the particular line to which the painter had recently waved them.

"I fear I'm tiring my *Olivia*," Heartly said, laying down his brush with a slightly brusque gesture. "Perhaps it will be well to finish the sitting."

"Tired!—not at all. Look at the clock. I have not given you much more than half-an-hour."

"When sitters become unsteady, we're apt to think they've had enough. I'm now at a very important stage of the likeness. I want that—that charming—I—I mean that laughing expression you so naturally give me when in your merry moods."

"Then you mean that I'm not now in my merry mood?"

"Honestly, I don't think you are. Probably I was wrong—wishing for an expression of merriment—to turn the conversation upon Frank."

"Why so?" she asked, eagerly,

"Well the subject of a patient only just snatched from the jaws of death is not one calculated to raise lively emotion, especially when we are both so deeply interested in that patient." Here the speaker's eye was fixed upon his hearer with an intensity and a purpose before which her own fell resistless, while a deep blush mantled over her cheek."

"Yes," she presently said, "we are both interested in Mr. Aylesmere. You love him as a brother, and I——"

As she paused for a few moments, Heartly filled up her sentence in his own thoughts with, "Would to Heaven I could believe your love for him exceeded not that of a sister!"

Marie resumed, "I feel that interest which it is in woman's nature to feel for the being whose life she has assisted to save."

But, Mr. Heartly, it seems to me—" Here she appeared to wrestle with some strong emotion—"that our present occupation has another purpose than to talk over your friend's illness and recovery. You have often said to me that business is business; and artists who would be prosperous as well as famous ought to make their art their business. I promised you to sit an hour. It is now a quarter to Twelve. I have a lesson to give in Belgrave Square at One—Come! Place me exactly as you wish—hands—eyes—general pose—and ask of me the exact expression necessary—you shall have it."

"Thank you; I know your great power of self-control." Then he added to himself, "and you shall henceforth see that it is equalled by my own!" From that moment to the end of the sitting, whatever may have been the secret thoughts whether of painter or of sitter, the exigencies of these several duties were complied with in every respect.

Marie's opinion as to the convalescence of her "patient" was confirmed by his medical man. That afternoon he quitted his bed for the first time after the brain fever which, during six weeks, had kept him there. His progress towards recovery was unexpectedly rapid. Another fortnight and he was in a state to give what he cheerily called a light prandial refecton in honour of his cure.

The party consisted of Marie and her step-father, Heartly, and Screesman, who, being in London on business, had happened to drop in during the afternoon. The viands were not various, but they were skilfully served up by Monsieur Beaubois, who for the nonce donned the white paper cap and snowy apron of a *chef de cuisine*. The guests waited upon themselves and their host, he being from first to last permitted—nay, constrained—to remain in his chair, lest he should over-fatigue himself. The liquors wherewith the edibles were, in medieval phrase, washed down, consisted of Champagne and Bordeaux. Monsieur Beaubois naturally enjoyed the advantage of a "connection" in his country's wines, and as he dealt honestly with his lodgers generally, super-honestly with his *compatriotes*, we may be sure that the wines furnished were entirely reliable.

If a modicum of Highland whisky was introduced later in the evening, its consumption was confined to Screesman, upon

whom moderation was strictly enjoined by Frank, the latter having no desire that his fellow-lodgers should witness an exhibition of the ex-manager's peculiar weakness. In spite, however, of all the host's precautions, the French wines and the Scotch spirit not agreeing with one another, disagreed with Screesman, and about ten o'clock he began to grow noisily facetious, and reckless both as to the matter and the manner of his conversation. Perceiving this, Marie called Frank's attention to the clock, and reminded him that the doctor had forbidden late hours. Frank taking the hint, the party was forthwith broken up, though Screesman, who proposed to quit London the following day, tarried for a few parting words with his host.

"Well, dear boy, how about your future plans?" he asked, when the two were left together.

Frank replied that as yet he had formed none, though he knew he must soon do so.

"Of course you must. I quite understand that necessity. The money chest has been pretty well drained I expect. Doctors don't call twice a day without—eh!—You know what I mean."

"Oh Screezy, for goodness sake don't upset me! I'm not equal to the occasion. Plenty of time to think of business!"

"Ah! well I'm glad there is plenty of time to think of business. As I told you, Tilson was asking about you this morning. No doubt he has something in his eye for you. But I say! What a wonder that Anglo-French girl is! Don't I think I see her in High Comedy parts? Do you know there's a grand air in her, with a drawing up of her tall, graceful figure under certain emotions, that remind one of Miss O'Neil?—and to come to later times, her laugh rings with a silvery sound in one's ear like Mrs. Nisbet's. Why don't you persuade her to take to the stage?"

"Stage! Why she's one of the most rising pianistes of the day—Besides, I'm not in a position to persuade her to do anything."

"Oh Francis! Oh! oh! you sly dog!" This accompanied by a comic stage poke in the ribs.

"What do you mean by sly dog?"

"Well then, let's say lucky dog."

"Screesman, I'm completely mystified."

"No, no, Francis—don't try to come that over an old hand like Charles Screesman."

"I sincerely wish Charles Screesman would explain himself, and let me go to bed."

"To bed, eh?"—theatrically, and just a trifle thickly—"To bed—doubtless to sleep—perchance to dream—but to dream no dreams less pleasant than those of love—successful love—dreams wherein there will seem to hover o'er you, casting tender glances, smiling soft smiles, sighing deep sighs, a fair girl whose features will be those of none other than—Marie Duhamel! Aha! friend of my bosom! Have I struck home to your heart of hearts?"

The concluding words of this half-theatrical, half-tipsy tirade found their application in the utterly scared look with which Frank had received the culminating name.

Rising suddenly from the sofa on which he had been partly reclining, he gazed for a few moments silently at the speaker.

"Your look," Screeaman said, laughing, "is almost up to the mark of Hamlet in the Ghost scene—it's good acting, if it be acting."

"Stay! stay!" cried Frank, eagerly, "don't joke about this! Answer me honestly, truly, as a friend! Is your nonsensical rhapsody pointed merely at two persons of opposite sexes happening to live in the same house, and to be on particularly intimate terms, or do you found your fantastic—but believe me most erroneous—belief, upon anything you have observed in—in either of us during dinner?"

"All fantasy apart," Screesman replied, as he lighted a cigar previously to his departure, "the result of my observations during dinner is that you have, wittingly or not, won that lovely girl's heart."

"Pshaw, man! you are imagining a drama of life after our stage pattern," Frank said, dropping upon the sofa; "you must not let any such absurdity get hold of your imagination. You don't understand the French character. Marie Duhamel is, like the rest of her nation, demonstrative. She voluntarily took upon herself the task of—I may almost call it nursing me through my illness—watched over me, as Heartly says, like a Sister of Charity. She is pleased at the results of her

own exertions, and makes no attempt to conceal her satisfaction from those she believes interested in me—that's all."

"If that's all, my dear Francis, all's well. But between you and me and this very excellent cigar, I don't think it is so—a mere matter of opinion, you know. I say no more; but this I do say, put Miss Duhamel on the stage—as Mrs. Philip Francis or not, that's your business—and, take old Screesy's word for it, she'll bring you a fortune. Do you hear me, sir?—a fortune."

After which, scarcely restrained by Frank's cold reception of the above authoritative dictum from once more digging him in the ribs, Screesman made his way, a trifle unsteadily, to the door.

Left to himself, Frank's attitude of reflection during many minutes proved that the words uttered by Screesman had not fallen on unheeding ears.

"Won Marie's heart!"—Thus ran his thoughts—"He! Frank Aylesmere! Could it be so?" And admitting, for the sake of argument, that Marie's feelings towards him were those suspected by Screesman, what were his (Frank's) towards her? He could not but remember how, in past days at Boulogne, he had come to regard her with a boyish, uncalculating preference, and how, when on recognising in the handsome watcher of his sick bed, "*la petite* Duhamel," his heart had been filled with tenderness, and a calm security, which, in itself, seemed to guarantee his ultimate recovery. Nor could he deny that during his convalescence, Marie's presence twice or thrice in the course of the day had become to him almost a necessary condition of existence. Then admitting—also for the sake of argument—that his regard for her amounted to the passion generically termed "love," what was to be its issue? At the bare idea of marriage, not particularly with Marie, but with any woman he was likely to come across, he smiled incredulously. That a young fellow with his expensive tastes, knocking about the world, devoid of means save those to be derived from a precarious profession, should burden himself with a wife seemed preposterous. On the other hand, the thought of pursuing with any lighter sort of love such a woman as Marie, who, for all her charming *abandon* and naturalness, seemed surrounded with a halo of

native purity commanding universal respect, was inadmissible for a single moment.

But, after all, Screesman was probably in error. The man was half-boosy, and just looked at life through the theatrical spectacles he had been wearing for so many years. Frank would carefully observe Marie's demeanour towards himself, and would from that judge what ought to be his bearing towards her. Enough on the subject for to-night. He was getting drowsy. It was time to retire to bed, and if there perchance to dream, as Screesman had theatrically suggested, why, then, his dream would be airy nothings, that, pleasant or unpleasant, would fade away before the morning light. With which conclusion he entered his bed-room.

Contrary to the ex-manager's poetical prognostications, Frank's sleep—the sleep of wholesome weariness and returning health—was profound and dreamless. By Eleven, as yet an unwontedly early hour for him, he had finished his light breakfast and was ready for the visit of inquiry which the pianiste habitually made as she passed his door on her way to give her first lesson.

It was with a more inquiring glance than usual that he watched her countenance as, entering, she said, "I see there will be a satisfactory bulletin this morning—yesterday's festivity has done you no harm."

"Quite the contrary, Mademoiselle ; I feel all the better for our little merry-making ; and bulletins will soon cease altogether. I hope to be at work before the month is over. Look"—taking some bank notes from a pocket-book—"I have no secrets from you—my last four five-pound notes ; and the deuce knows how much owing to my doctor and my landlord. You eye me seriously, as well you may—you know how slowly the money comes in to us young professionals. Happily for you, you know less how quickly it goes. You're a good economist—I regret to say I'm quite the reverse. Now to turn to another subject—I'm going to astonish you—I am, indeed ! I have a proposal to make to you"—but perceiving how deep a blush now suffused Marie's cheek, and at once, by the light of Screesman's suspicion, comprehending its origin, he hastened to add with marked accentuation, "a professional proposal."

"Professional !"—Frank's attentive ear detected the disap-

pointment that marked her exclamation: "Professional!—Indeed! What is it?"

"Screeaman, who has a wonderfully accurate discrimination as to stage qualifications, thinks you would make a first-rate actress."

"Actress!—I!"

"Yes, he foresees for you, fame, fortune, everything that an artist can desire."

Frank, who had approached her, now borne away less by any irrepressible ardour towards her than by his enthusiasm for the art in question, possibly also by his habits of theatrical gesture, seized her two hands, and warmly pressed them, as he continued, "Ay, and Screeaman is right—I believe, Marie Duhamel, you are filled with the true dramatic inspiration. What an *Ophelia* to play *Hamlet* to!"

"Ah!" interrupting him, "You would be my *Hamlet*?"

"Of course, I am assuming that."

"And if I—I played *Juliet*, would you be my *Romeo*?"

"Hum!—I am getting rather old for *Romeo*—besides, it's the fashion now to put women in *Romeo*—but you look serious on a sudden."

"I was thinking how sadly both the plays end—a grave for each of those lovely creations."

"They are tragedies you know, and——"

"Tell me honestly," again interrupting him, "would you have me to change my profession for yours?"

Suddenly Frank seemed to recollect himself, quietly dropped her hand, and said, pointedly—"It is not a question of my wishes, but of your interests."

Quick to perceive the alteration in his voice and manner, Marie asked, "Would you advise it?"

"Honestly and truly I believe you would succeed as an actress—I have not the least doubt on the subject; and if you did, you would, before long, be making hundreds where you are now making tens."

"In fact," Marie said, "you take a strictly money view of the matter?"

"As artists, who have to live by our art, that's the only view we are justified in taking."

"You are right, Mr. Aylesmere, quite right; and taking

that view, I'll say that certain tens are better than uncertain hundreds."

"Which means that you'll stick to your piano and your pupils. Prudent, no doubt ; and yet it would have been very pleasant to watch your progress on the stage, to observe how an exceptional intelligence like yours can overcome mere technical difficulties which, with ordinary capacities, are only mastered by long and severe apprenticeship."

In thus speaking, hurried away by his own imaginary picture, he had again taken her two hands, and held them firmly clasped in his own. Marie, all too ready to be deceived as to the nature of his feelings, thus hastened to pursue the dangerous theme, fixing on him, the while, her luminous eyes with an expression of most perilous witchery.

"And where the intelligence you are pleased to recognise in me fell short, I should have the benefit of your advice, your assistance, your experience, should I not?"

"Can you doubt it, Marie? my gentle, tender——" What Frank, incautiously perhaps, was about to add, will remain for ever unknown, since at that moment Heartly's somewhat measured step was heard on the upper staircase, giving notice that a visit from him was imminent. Marie instantly withdrew her hands from Frank's grasp, whispered, "If you are serious, consult our common friend Heartly on the subject," and gliding softly from the room, had quitted the house before the painter even reached the first floor landing-place.

CHAPTER X.

ONCE more my narrative returns to Boulogne-sur-Mer.

It is the middle of August, that is to say, the height of the bathing season, and about two months after Frank Aylesmere's perfect recovery, and resumption of his professional duties by a short series of highly successful provincial performances.

It may be mentioned in passing that, although Frank had given up his lodgings in the "Maison Beaubois," he continued to keep up a brisk correspondence with both Marie and Heartly; the former perceiving (not without regret) that he never wrote a single word to her which she was not invited to show to the latter. Still—such is woman's capacity for devotion—Frank has remained in her heart as the object of a deep and secret attachment which not only she cannot, but will not attempt to conquer. Heartly the while, knowing well how vain a shadow she is pursuing, is content to let that love of his for her which the sagacious reader has doubtless already discovered, feed on such crumbs of hope and comfort as he can extract from the force of circumstances and the chances of the future.

It is some four years since we lost sight of Miss Plaistow. Seen by the glare of the gas lights in the *Etablissement des Bains*, at which she is a regular attendant, the spinster is not a day older than she then was. The bloom on her cheeks is of that sort which mocks at time! Neither has her temper, as might have been expected, increased in acerbity; on the contrary, for she has within the last year inherited largely from a deceased brother, whereby her income has risen from four or five hundred a year, eked out by the letting of her house during "the season," to very nearly three thousand; a sum which at Boulogne, to a childless woman, is positive wealth. Instead of the dubious luncheon and meagre tea-parties wherewith she used to tempt a mixed society around her, she now bids whom she will to *recherché* dinners and elaborate *soirées—musicales* or *dansantes*, as may be.

At the particular time of which I write Miss Plaistow is in a state of considerable turmoil and excitement. About ten days ago she had received a letter from her former school-fellow, *née* Emily Thorpe, but known to us as Mrs. Leadstone of Lentworth, in which the writer had asked her to look out for a house—the best that was to be had for money, with a view to a two or three months' occupation. Accordingly she had succeeded in obtaining, at a fabulous rent, a so-called *château*, which shall not be further particularised than as being situated a little way out of the town; and there now lies on her drawing-room table the local journal, "La Saison," in

which, among the latest subscribers to the *Etablissement*, may be read the names of—

“MADAME ET MADEMOISELLE LEADSTONE,

“CHATEAU R——,

“ROUTE DE ——.”

When it is said that Miss Plaistow and Miss Thorpe had been school-fellows, it should be added that a somewhat important distinction had, at that remote period, existed between them. Anna Plaistow was at school with a view to subsequent independence and the usual ulterior contingency of marriage; Emily Thorpe with a professional and educational perspective—in short, the latter was a pupil teacher.

The marriage which, after many years of educational labour, Miss Thorpe contracted with the thriving Tom Leadstone, coarse and unlettered though he was, excited, at the time, no little envy on the part of Anna Plaistow, who had herself suffered discomfiture in more than one matrimonial scheme; but when subsequently, by the death of her brother, all financial disparity between the two practically disappeared, the spinster felt that she was, from a social point of view, the superior of the *ci-devant* miller's wife. All this, however, she now kept to herself, for she was flattered at the prospect of playing off before the Boulonnais these Leadstones—great Middleshire people! with all their attendant splendour of equipage and establishment—as her very particular and intimate friends.

Mrs. Leadstone had judged it necessary in the first interview she had with Miss Plaistow after her arrival, to make a sort of apology to that dear friend of her early days for her migration to so unfashionable a resort as Boulogne-sur-mer. This, to say the least, was out of all good taste, seeing that Miss Plaistow was one of Society's shining lights in the place so aspersed.

But Mrs. Leadstone (*née* Thorpe) was accustomed, and often by preference, to tread upon the moral corns of others; moreover, being, in the present instance, quite aware of her former schoolfellow's ability to hold her own in any verbal encounter whatever, she was not sorry to fire a shot at the spinstress thus early in their renewed acquaintance.

It appeared, then, according to her version of the story,

firstly that her daughter—"my darling Juliana, my one object in life, as you well know, my dear Miss Plaistow" (she always talked of Juliana as her's, never as Mr. Leadstone's)—had lately been a little out of sorts—not quite her usual light-hearted self—seemed tired of their hum-drum country life, just as she had before seemed tired of London. Sea-air prescribed for her "just, you know, Miss Plaistow, as doctors do prescribe the thing they see you want;" secondly, that a necessity had been discovered—oh! an absolute necessity—for enlarging the kitchen at "our place in Middleshire." Then had arisen, she went on to say, a great discussion as to where this sea-air should be inhaled. Mr. Leadstone held out for the breezes blowing over British waters, because Mr. Leadstone, who always had his farming and now these new building operations to look after, required to be within a few hours of home. Brighton had been voted too hot, Worthing little better, Hastings and St. Leonard's ovens, Broadstairs too dull. Nobody had ventured to propose such places as Ramsgate or Margate (Houndsditch-by-the-Sea as the latter has been called). The English coasts abandoned, Havre, Dieppe, Trouville, had been in turn proposed and rejected as too far from Middleshire. Boulogne alone—Anglo-French Boulogne—dear to London cockneys and Parisian *badauds*—offered the accessibility which was Mr. Leadstone's sole condition of consent. Boulogne had accordingly been selected, and there she was, with her adored Juliana, and "a small part" of the Lentworth establishment (there were only ten servants). As for Mr. Leadstone he intended to run over from time to time, "getting rid of some of his Sundays with us, you know, and throwing in a Saturday and a Monday."

The truth on this last point was, that the fewer and the farther between Mr. Leadstone's visits, the better would Mrs. Leadstone be pleased; for whereas she had come prepared to be a good deal *en evidence*, and to make some sensation, his grammatical solecisms and his unpolished demeanour were perpetual stumbling-blocks in the way of her social successes.

In addition to this, she was just then engaged in playing a little game of her own, which has been already hinted at, and of which we shall anon hear more, whose success she felt might be endangered by her husband's too constant presence.

As to Juliana being "out of sorts," and all the rest of it—a mere fiction. It is not to be doubted that Mrs. Leadstone had in her governess days been used to instil the importance of truth, among other virtues, into the minds of her pupils, no less so than that such teachings were uttered in the "do as I say, not as I do" spirit, for practically, a less truthful woman than she was never existed. Not that she would tell palpable and deliberate lies, which, being found out, might be cast in her teeth; but that she systematically preferred attaining any given end by a roundabout, to a direct way, and affected mystery when openness would equally have served her turn. Indeed, I believe she rather despised truthfulness as the sign of a weak and credulous nature, while she regarded a turn for finesse and diplomacy (a word she was very fond of) as the proof of a superior intellect. She even once, I have been told, in a moment of unusual expansiveness, went the length of supporting her system by a passage unfairly wrested from St. Paul, when he says to the Corinthians "Being crafty, I caught you with guile."

Well, the fact was that the famous kitchen improvement necessitating a two or three months' absence, in itself a positive nuisance to Mr. Leadstone, had been suggested and insisted upon by Mrs. Leadstone herself, for the mere purpose of getting away from Lentworth; while Juliana, in perfect health and the highest spirits, readily accepted whatever her mother proposed in the way of a sea trip, for the mere fun of the thing.

All this Mrs. Leadstone might have told Miss Plaistow as easily as not—keeping to herself, if she chose, the *arrière pensée* in which the expedition had originated—but she preferred a story which threw around herself a veil of sentiment, and brought into relief her "one object in life," her "adored Juliana!" and so on. As to that little game of her own, she could have played it quite as well anywhere in the world as at Boulogne, provided Mr. Leadstone were not too constantly at her elbow.

Upon the ground that Boulogne-by-the-sea is a hilly town—as indeed it is—Mrs. Leadstone had brought over the stately equipage which it was her delight to parade on the occasions of her more distant visits in Middleshire, a barouche

and four, driven postilion fashion. This turn-out naturally excited much observation in a place where private carriages of any sort are few in number, and among them such as pretend to style and taste in a decided minority. But the occupants of the splendidly-horsed barouche attracted no less attention among the idlers of Boulogne than the equipage itself.

"A fine showy woman—thoroughly well dressed, that Mrs. Delstone—Bilstone—Bloodstone." For during the first week of her friend's occupation of the Château R——, Miss Plaistow had only introduced them to three or four among her set, and their cards not yet having been seen on any table whatever there existed considerable uncertainty on the subject of their name—"and a lovely girl, that Miss Delstone, or Bilstone, or Bloodstone," was the opinion generally expressed concerning the two ladies in question.

As a rule, it may be said that there is at Boulogne a laudable absence of interest in new English arrivals there. The English colony know one another, visit one another, and enquire after one another's affairs; but so many visitors arrive and depart daily during the "season," and these visitors so freely follow their own individual inclinations, and seem so anxious to rub out the starch of home conventionalism, that a general, and very pleasant system of *laissez faire* is allowed to prevail.

Thus it happened that when, one night, Mrs. Leadstone agreed to Miss Plaistow's proposal of putting in a first appearance at one of the *Etablissement* dress-balls, the three ladies entered a *salle de danse* in which not a single person present, save Miss Plaistow herself, could, if asked, have given the names of "the fine showy woman," and "the lovely girl" who accompanied the highly decorated spinster.

Among the very few persons whom Miss Plaistow had introduced to her Middleshire friends, was the Vicomte de Foix. This middle-aged Parisian has been introduced to the readers in a former work,* as a rabid Anglomaniac, and an ardent worshipper of *le sport*, kindly of heart, rather light of head, a shrewd observer of human nature, and in every respect a *charmant garçon*. M. de Foix, always ready to bow before the

* The Ringwoods of Ringwood.

shrine of English beauty, had at first sight of Juliana, thrown himself (figuratively) at her feet, declaring, with a little confusion of imagery, that if Madame her mamma's *bel equipage à la Daumont* had been the Car of Juggernaut, he would, to earn a smile from her, have submitted to spinal dislocation beneath its wheels. He gave her to understand that she was *adorable—ravissante—la grace incarnée*—his *beau idéal* of English female perfection.

It mattered little to him, and certainly nothing to her—that he had said the same thing before to hundreds of English girls. The expressions had little or no real meaning. Put into plain English, and coming from the lips of an average Englishman, they would have amounted to an opinion that the young lady in question was a remarkably pretty and very nice girl. The Vicomte, however, for all his characteristic *légèreté* and assumed exaggeration, was a gentleman to the depth of his heart and the tips of his fingers, possessing that instinctive delicacy of mind which the least experienced woman never fails to recognise and appreciate in his sex. He had succeeded in both amusing and pleasing Juliana, and it was with real satisfaction that, after having sat beside her mother and Miss Plaistow for a good half hour, listening to the admirably performed dance music, but feeling no interest in the motley crowd of dancers, she saw him approaching arm in arm with another and a younger man.

If the truth must be told, M. de Foix was not at that moment coming up specially to Juliana, he was skirting the dancers, with the intention of pointing out to his companion *une Anglaise* who had attracted his attention at a previous ball—now seated a little above Miss Plaistow's party—"une femme superbe, mon cher," he said—"perhaps too high for some tastes; type Highlander—hair like the mane to my roan cob, but Dieu sait for what she come here! She never speak—never smile; her face stony like that of an Egyptian sphynx." Nevertheless, on perceiving Juliana, the Vicomte stopped short, and withdrawing his arm from that of his companion, addressed himself in the first instance to the two elder ladies. This gave Juliana time to cast a shy glance at the said companion, and brief as it was, she was enabled to remark that he was a tall young man, with dark crisp hair cut rather short,

wearing a moustache and a peaked beard, whose countenance seemed to her the handsomest she had ever looked upon.

There is something in such glances which partakes of the nature of electricity, and the young man so looked upon, in his turn, instantaneously comprehended that he had made a not unfavourable impression on this strikingly lovely girl. When, therefore, her glance withdrawn from him, she looked first at her own feet, then round at her mother, and finally up at the nearest chandelier, he made bold to indulge himself in a more lengthened survey of her form and features.

"I wonder whether she's as charming as she's pretty!" he said to himself.

Her thoughts the while ran thus—"I wonder whether he is French or English,—I wish he would speak, I haven't had one dance yet—I wonder whether he's a good dancer, and if he is, whether the Vicomte will introduce him to me."

Miss Plaistow had a blind faith in the Vicomte, his antecedents being well known to her, and she hastened to engage his good-looking young friend, whose features by the way seemed not altogether unknown to her, in conversation. Mrs. Leadstone, struck by his distinguished air, followed suit; Juliana, still shily, and with half averted eye, ventured upon a few occasional words, until by degrees, the young stranger found himself discussing (in the purest English, Juliana observed) the various small subjects incidental to the locality and the occasion, with the entire party.

All who know the Vicomte are aware that he is a conversational monopolist. It may have been with this conviction that the Vicomte's young companion addressed himself to Juliana rather than to the two elder ladies, whose attention M. de Foix seemed to have secured.

Thus it happened that the conversation became divided.

Probably the lively Vicomte's remarks to Mesdames Leadstone and Plaistow will be more amusing to the reader than the less one-sided discourse of the two young people, however agreeable that may have been to themselves.

"I believe," the Vicomte said, addressing Mrs. Leadstone, "Madame sees this Salle de danse for the first time. You Madame—" to the spinster, "have already witnessed the cosmopolitan eccentricities here displayed for three months during

each year. One characteristic always strike me—I believe it is owed to you English—I mean the predominance of the family element—useful perhaps, when, as here, the company is promiscuous. Where, in a Parisian or London ball-room, will you see a brother dancing with his sister—a husband with his wife—even fathers with daughters? There are fifty such couples in this crowded polka. There I see two Smittes—Monsieur et Madame :—There two Johnsons, or Simpsons, or some other sons, their resemblance to each other proclaims them brothers and sisters. There Monsieur Green et Mademoiselle sa fille. There again, ce Monsieur chauve—bald, you call it. Will that fat, bald man go puff! puff! and risk un coup d'apoplexie, to let his daughter enjoy the dance which no young partner, known to him, offers her? And a propos of baldness, and age, they present here no impediment to the worship of Terpsichore. I give you my parole d'honneur, I count one night just eighteen bald-headed men dancing. Well, I make a calcul——, rapid, of course : I multiply the heads by an age moyen—ne riez pas when I tell you the amount—more than one thousand years—think of that—Mille ans! The reflection would prevent me to dance even if I had the inclination.”

Miss Plaistow ventured to observe that, after all, people came here to amuse themselves, and that as men danced, not upon their heads, but upon their legs, why should not they go on dancing as long as their legs could carry them through a polka or a waltz?

Mrs. Leadstone thought the occasion fitting to observe majestically, that really in the circles that she was in the habit of frequenting, notoriously the dancing men were chiefly either boys or middle-aged men. The young men, properly so-called, having ceased to enter the lists as ball partners, because they preferred their betting, their Richmond dinners in doubtful society, their stalls at burlesque theatres, their smoking at music halls—in short, to speak plainly, their manifold anti-matrimonial pursuits.

The Vicomte had at the very outset of this *petit* speech been baffled by the word “circles,” which he, in his imperfect knowledge of English, translated in its literal French meaning of “clubs;” so, despairing to follow Mrs. Leadstone to her

climax, he prudently turned a deaf ear to her, and contented himself by saying animatedly, "Madame a parfaitement raison, mais parfaitement !" immediately after which he shunted the conversation on a totally different pair of rails.

The polka had been concluded, and a waltz was announced as the next dance. Turning quickly to Juliana, he asked her whether she had yet danced. To her reply in the negative, he observed, "Ah! you do not care to dance. The dancers are all strangers. *Idée Anglaise!* Mais après tout one cannot deny that we have here a very mixed company."

"Why don't you ask her to dance yourself, Vicomte?" Miss Plaistow laughingly thrust in, for de Foix was at the period of life when a *chaperone*, or a lady capable of exercising *chaperonie* functions, may put such a question without incurring the imputation of pushing her charge into his arms.

"*Helas!*" he exclaimed, elevating at once his eyebrows and his shoulders, "I have cease to dance before my young friend here," taking the hand of the "young friend" in question, with the effusiveness of long attachment, "began his first steps. *Mais sapristi!* How I am *bête!* *Cher ami,*" turning to his "young friend," whose hand he still held, "if *Mademoisells* will consent, I propose you as my substitute. *Pourquoi pas?* Of course you *valse*; you cannot otherwise than *valse*. Oh! *Mademoiselle* may rely on my intelligence to discover a *valseur*. Permit me, *Mademoiselle*, to present *Monsieur*."

To this followed a series of pantomimic gestures, the result of which was that "*Monsieur*," whoever he might be, advanced towards "*Mademoiselle*," bowed and offered his arm; that "*Mademoiselle*" assented with a graceful inclination of her lovely head, rose, gave her bouquet to her mother, threw off her light scarf, and that then "*Monsieur*" and "*Mademoiselle*" walked off to take a surveying promenade down the *salle*, preparatory to joining in the forthcoming waltz, the Vicomte walking for a few paces beside them.

Mrs. Leadstone and Miss Plaistow gazed after the young couple and the Vicomte till they became lost in the crowd.

"Wonderfully good-looking I call that young Frenchman," said Miss Plaistow, "and how well he talks English! No doubt a man perfectly *bien posé!* The Vicomte cannot possibly know any who are not."

"Are you sure he is French?" asked Mrs Leadstone, "I never heard any foreigner—not even a Russian—speak English as he does. But perhaps in this half-English town Frenchmen talk English naturally."

"Oh! I can't say for certain, Mrs. Leadstone. I took him for a Frenchman, because, seeing the Vicomte so intimate with him, I thought they must be *compatriotes*. But you may be right and I wrong. We shall learn all about him from the Vicomte. I can't help thinking I have seen him before. One knocks against so many different people when one's a little *répandu*, that it's impossible to remember where one meets this or that particular person."

"Well," Mrs. Leadstone interposed, somewhat anxiously, "as he's dancing with my daughter, I shall be glad to know who and what he is."

"Oh never fear, my dear friend; the Vicomte will tell you all about him, and you may rest assured you will hear nothing but what is completely satisfactory."

"I don't see the Vicomte—do you?" asked Mrs. Leadstone, looking right and left.

Miss Plaistow replied tartly, that it was useless to seek for anybody in that ever-shifting crowd. Indeed she viewed her dear friend's anxious glances in the light of a doubt as to the perfect presentableness of her friend and her friend's friends.

As for the Vicomte, always impatient at being tied to any particular spot, or any particular set of people, he had fluttered off in search of other spots and other sets of people, without the slightest thought of returning, either in company or not in company with his young friend, to the vicinity of Miss Plaistow and her party.

It is necessary for the purposes of our story, that we should accompany the young couple, who, as yet ignorant even of each other's names, have quitted their elders. Indeed the consequences which the acquaintance thus inaugurated by mere haphazard is destined to have upon the future of the one and the other, are of sufficient importance to demand the honours of a fresh chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

AND first, a few words concerning Juliana, of whom we have not heard for the best part of a year.

She is in her nineteenth year, and physically has so far fulfilled the promise of her school days, that her mother is quite justified in anticipating her successful first appearance in London, next spring, as not only one of the wealthiest, but one of the prettiest girls of "the season."

If, morally speaking, there is something less to be said in her favour, the cause is to be found less in any natural defects than in the manner of her bringing up.

As for that fashionable finishing schoolmistress, Mrs. Belstrode, the system upon which she made prospective wives and mothers out of the young (and generally very thorough-bred) girls committed to her charge, was pretty much the same as she would have followed had her mission been to make beautiful artificial flowers out of so much paper, paint, spangles, and gum. All with her was surface and exterior. Her "dear young ladies" were destined to ornament the upper circles of "Society," and beyond the demands of that "Society" she gave herself no trouble. What those demands of "Society" are needs not to be here told.

The real difficulties, however, which had surrounded the development of Juliana's character were to be found at home—at home, and emanating from her mother! That source, which should be the over-flowing fountain of good alone to a child, was to her the origin of whatever evil did enter into her composition. It was not much perhaps, but such as it was, it sufficed to place her greatly at the mercy of future circumstances over which, with the mental gifts she incontestably possessed, she ought easily to have triumphed.

Juliana had at once a highly sensitive organization, and a warm, tender, perhaps rather soft heart—a heart inviting, nay, demanding sympathy, while the imaginative faculty was largely developed in her. The early scholastic cultivation of her mental powers, unhappily wanting to her, was exactly that process which would have formed an antidote to the baneful effects of subsequent maternal mismanagement.

Was it or was it not fortunate for her that the unquestioning love she bore her mother, blinded her to that mother's innate selfishness and hollowness of character? Had she not been so blinded, although her love might have been weakened and her respect diminished, she might have withstood an influence which afterwards proved highly detrimental to her, and she might have been spared a future awakening from many delusions. But, in addition, it was hardly possible that her character should not in some degree suffer from her perpetual contact with Mrs. Leadstone's ill-regulated temper, and that her own rather plastic nature should not receive some unfortunate impressions from this lady's violent alternations between effusiveness and apathy; tenderness and repression. Those scenes of forced emotion and theatrical display, also, to which the mother occasionally resorted, had an injurious effect upon the irritable nervous system of the daughter.

Still, allowing for all these minor drawbacks, Juliana is a sweet creature, formed to be no less admired than loved. Ay—there's the rub—loved!

Admired she is by men and women. For whatever may be said about the inherent envy in woman's nature, there is no such admirer of female excellence as your large-hearted, high-minded woman. Will she ever be loved with the genuine, disinterested love of which she is worthy—she the heiress of Lentworth and its £16,000 a year?

This question her father, rough and uneducated, but sensible and hearty, has now and then, in such quiet moments as his many self-enforced duties leave him, put to himself—without being able to answer it satisfactorily.

This question her hollow-hearted mother has never troubled herself to ask. Married, as a matter of course, the heiress of Lentworth will be; and, as a matter of nineteenth century expediency, into the peerage of England, Scotland, or Ireland. Love may or may not follow on her union. In Mrs. Leadstone's own case it certainly did not. She never expected that it would—and has she not hitherto got on very well without it? Do not thousands of couples pass from the altar to the grave more or less happily without it? Why then not Juliana?

* * * * *

"Really a splendid ball-room—and what an admirable orchestra!"

"Boulogne seems very full."

"I wonder how many hundreds of its nomadic population are crowded in here to-night?"

"The weather has been really delightful—has it not?"

"Rather hot, but not too much so for the time of year."

It was with these and a few similar reciprocal commonplace phrases, that Juliana and Juliana's partner, after they had—in the nautical phrase suited to the locality—cast off their convoy, the Vicomte, proceeded to inaugurate their acquaintance—the prologue, we shall find, of a serious and life-long play.

Upon this followed the waltz. Ah, what a never-to-be-forgotten waltz it was to them!

The Vicomte had guessed rightly. His "*jeune ami*" was a first-rate waltzer, though with such a partner as Juliana Leadstone, even a second-rate "performer" might have been inspired to outdo his ordinary self. Such airiness of carriage, yet such firmness of step! Such self-confidence, yet such ready abandonment to the guidance of her cavalier! And indeed, amid those multitudinous couples whirling hither and thither, up the room, down the room, across the room at every possible and impossible angle, steering of the most judicious order is demanded of the cavalier who would avoid the collisions which are perpetually bringing the careless and unskilful to grief.

Juliana was not yet "out" in the strict sense of the term. She had not been presented at Court, and then made to run the gauntlet of eighteen parties per week, without reckoning garden parties and afternoon drums, in those charmed circles which her mother hoped to frequent. Her experience of waltzing partners was extremely limited, and her dancing was almost that of the pupil fresh from the professor's hands, who has as often waltzed "*gentleman*" as "*lady*" with her schoolfellows; but she inferred from the various narratives of her elder female friends that all gentlemen could not be such good waltzers as this one. It was impossible—else whence the complaints, so frequently poured into her ear, of satin-clad feet heavily trodden upon, of time resolutely set at

defiance, of being either squeezed till the breath was nearly out of your body, or held so loosely and hesitatingly that another couple might, with no great effort, cleave you and your cavalier asunder; of this arm set rigidly and uncomfortably at an acute angle on the holder's hip; of that pointed aloft, stiff and straight, like an elevated pump handle; of another held downwards as if in permanent readiness to break an imminent fall? Were these exaggerated tales, or had the Vicomte de Foix providentially selected for her a partner such as was rarely to be met with? Be that as it might, the waltz over, she admitted to herself that she had thoroughly enjoyed it, and wished it were beginning again; nay, more, she gave proof of her unsophisticated nature by thanking the Vicomte's friend, and asking him whether he approved of her dancing.

"If thanks are due, they should be mine," was the natural reply; "and as for your dancing, it is simply perfection. But pray allow me to take you in search of a little air. The heat of this room is enough to make a salamander pant."

Juliana readily accepting the offer, the cavalier led her through the surrounding rooms and corridors till they reached the refreshment-room. Then he asked her would she not like an ice, or some refreshing beverage? He would recommend a syphon of eau de seltz, with sirop de groseilles. She admitted that she was extraordinarily thirsty, and would take whatever he recommended, as she was not learned in the matter of French refreshments.

Hereupon a syphon of eau de seltz and a tiny decanter of the luscious sirop in question were ordered, and placed upon one of the small marble tables scattered about the room, at which they took seats.

"It is delicious," Juliana said, as she nearly emptied the simple and refreshing contents of the tumbler prepared for her. "But you don't take any yourself."

"Oh! never mind me. I'm waiting to give you a little more."

"Thank you; but only on condition that you give yourself some."

"It's very kind of you to think of me, but let me ask you not to wait. The whole virtue of the mixture is in the *mousse*."

Now all this conversation was utterly commonplace, and had reference to the mere satisfaction of a material craving engendered by unwonted corporeal motion; yet, like an unpretending melody, in some skilful musical composition, made to flow through a rich and harmonious accompaniment, it was carried on amid a cloud of pleased looks, "wreathed smiles," and warm eye-flashings that raised the two speakers to the seventh heaven of delight.

You see Juliana was "fancy free"—she was romantic, and she was demonstrative.

As for the Vicomte's young friend, he was—but he will show himself to us quite soon enough. And here is the Vicomte standing at the buffet, where he has been solacing himself with a *choppe* of English pale ale. He is about to pay for the same when his wandering eye lights upon the young couple just preparing to rise from their table.

"Hein!" he says to himself. "Ils se rafraichissent! Tiens donc! Ce jeune homme will then pay the consommation of la charmante Miss! Non, non! I must not permit that!"

Here follows a whispered dialogue between the Vicomte and the *garçon*, together with the interchange of certain coin. This terminated, the Vicomte advances, and at the very moment when "ce jeune homme" and "la charmante Miss" are rising, whispers to the former, "I have paid for you. We settle that bagatelle to-morrow."

"Ah! a thousand thanks, Vicomte."

"N'en parlez pas! Do you return with mademoiselle to ces dames?"

"Yes, Vicomte, and you?"

"I go up-stairs to have another partie de billards with Monsieur here"—pointing to an Englishman who stood not far off. "Au plaisir, cher!"

As for the little payment made by the Vicomte, the "*cher*" at once perceived the delicate and gentlemanly ruse by which he had been withdrawn from a difficult position. It had never occurred to him, when suggesting to his partner the refreshment of which she had just partaken, that the room was a public room, and that he would be placed in the somewhat unpleasant situation of having to pay for the *consommation* of a young English lady to whom he was an entire stranger.

As for the young English lady herself, in her complete ignorance of the customs of the place, the question of such payment being necessary had never occurred to her.

On their way to rejoin "*ces dames*," the two entered into an engagement for a quadrille and for the next round dance, whatever it might happen to be.

Juliana deposited by the side of her, to confess the truth, somewhat anxious mother, who now sat alone—Miss Plaistow having been carried off by a friend to speak to that friend's wife in the outer room—Juliana's cavalier, after a few brief remarks, departed in search of the Vicomte.

The fact was that he burned with anxiety to learn something—at least the name—of his lovely partner. He found the Vicomte, cigar in mouth, hard at billiards with the Englishman whom he had pointed out in the refreshment-room.

Impossible to get a word with him on any subject unconnected with the game. The Vicomte was accustomed to go full tilt at whatever he undertook, and the "*Diabes!*" "*Pestes!*" and "*Sacrés!*" he was pouring forth at each stroke made by himself or his adversary, attested the absorption of his faculties, and warned all outsiders against approaching him.

A quarter-of-an-hour passed, which to the Vicomte's friend seemed an entire hour. Still no hope of getting the excited Vicomte's ear. The billiard-room is situated on the story above the ball-room, the latter being commanded by large windows through which it could now be seen that a quadrille was announced as forthcoming.

"I shall lose my quadrille with her," thought the anxious enquirer. "I can wait no longer." With which he hastened down to secure the promised dance.

In the meantime, the following dialogue was being maintained by the mother and daughter—

"Well, my love, you look as if you had enjoyed your waltz."

"I have indeed, mamma."

"Did your partner prove himself the good waltzer anticipated by the Vicomte de Foix?"

"Oh, an excellent waltzer!"

"Miss Plaistow and I were discussing his probable nationality. What say you—English or French?"

"English, most undoubtedly; but he speaks French perfectly. Marie Duhamel herself could wish for nothing better."

"Have you learnt his name?"

"No, we had neither of us taken engagement cards. It appears that he only arrived from England yesterday, on his way to Paris. But I don't suppose it much matters. We may never see him again after to-night." Here a sigh—but murmured so softly that mamma's ear failed to detect it.

"That's very likely, dear. As you say, it's of no great importance. Still, I'll ask the Vicomte, when he comes this way."

"The Vicomte? He told us, when we saw him a short time ago, that he was going upstairs to play at billiards."

"Billiards, eh? Then we may not see him before we go." (Looking at her watch). "Half-past eleven. I'm getting a little tired. Miss Plaistow has—rather coolly, I think—left me to myself. What do you say about going, my love?"

"Going? Oh, not yet! I'm engaged for two dances."

"Indeed! Two? I suppose the Vicomte has presented somebody else?"

"No, mamma, I'm engaged to—to the same friend of his."

"The same? Indeed! I'm afraid you'll be making yourself remarked. Three dances!"

"Oh, mamma dear—no fear of that. From what the Vicomte says, people here keep pretty much to their own parties."

"Own parties? Yes, but this Mr.—Mr. whatever his name may be, does not happen to belong to our party. He's just a chance acquaintance, a young man—very gentlemanly, no doubt—brought up to us by a mutual friend. Perhaps friend is too strong an expression. I've no great opinion of foreign nobility, however ready Miss Plaistow may be to guarantee this Vicomte's respectability. No, no, my dear child, give me English nobility! Such people, for instance, as the Battle-boroughs."

If Juliana had been a young lady of the period, she would have exclaimed within her secret soul, "Hang the Battle-boroughs!"

Being what we know her to have been, she merely thought to herself, "Oh dear me! Still the Battleboroughs! I was in hopes we had run away from them."

The reader will not have forgotten that the Honourable Claude Cotherstone is the second son of the Right Honourable the Earl of Battleborough, and is, at present, heir presumptive to the Earldom.

"Well, but mamma," Juliana persisted, as she would persist when in the mood so to do, "since this gentleman is the only person in the room we know besides the Vicomte, it's not likely my dancing with him can be much remarked upon—Ah! Look at the *affiche*! I believe that's the right word—The next dance is to be a quadrille!"

"And I suppose that is one of your engagements with the Vicomte's friend, for I see him coming towards us." Then to herself, as with a graceful bow the Vicomte's friend carried off her too palpably willing and expectant daughter—"He certainly is wonderfully good-looking—very aristocratic too,—I should like to find out who he is—I fancy I saw something in Juliana's eye—Humph! A flash I haven't often seen there—perhaps I'm mistaken—but on the whole I'm not sorry to hear this Mr.—whatever his name may be doesn't make a long stay here." And Mrs. Leadstone fell to fanning herself vigorously, as if she would blow away any danger that might possibly lurk behind this new acquaintance, likely to interfere with her own particular matrimonial views for her daughter.

There is little to be said about the quadrille and the following dance—a Mazurka—comprised in the engagement somewhat sharply commented on by Mrs. Leadstone; and yet that little is in itself much, for these two dances served to plunge these two young persons heart and soul into the delicious intoxication of what seemed to one and the other—love at first sight!

At the conclusion of the Quadrille, Mrs. Leadstone was still found to be alone. When the couple returned after the Mazurka, Miss Plaistow had resumed her seat, but so much was the Vicomte's young friend occupied with Juliana that the spinstress had no opportunity of engaging him in conversation; she therefore, of necessity, suffered him to depart,

leaving her unenlightened as to his identity, though still convinced that she did not now see him for the first time.

As for the Vicomte, nothing was to be learnt from him that night, as he returned no more to the vicinity of *ces dames*. On the other hand, the object of Miss Plaistow's curiosity having ascended to the billiard-room, with the intention of keeping the Vicomte in view till his final departure, and there and then fastening upon him, *ces dames* were under the necessity of quitting the ball-room unescorted, and finding their servants and carriages by the ordinary mediation of the *Etablissement* functionaries.

Only when warned by the gradual lowering of the gas in the billiard-room did the Vicomte abandon his cue, pay his losses, light his ultimate cigar, and set forth with his impatient young friend; and even when the said impatient young friend had got him in tow, it appeared a matter of impossibility to turn the conversation in the desired channel.

The Vicomte's Anglomania had this night received fresh stimulus in the person of an Englishman equally remarkable, he said, for his fine play and his great luck at billiards.

This combination of play and luck, it appeared, had resulted in the transfer of six hundred francs from the Frenchman's to the Englishman's waistcoat pocket.

Now, the opinion which the Vicomte's young friend—as a looker on—had formed on the subject was that the Englishman had at first concealed his good play, in order to lure the Vicomte on to higher stakes. To have communicated his suspicions would have been gratuitously to wound the Vicomte's *amour propre*, so he kept his own counsel; besides which, he was, as we know, full of another subject.

"Parole d'honneur, mon cher"—thus the Vicomte, as they quitted the *Etablissement*—"I am petrified. I do not pretend to be one of the best billiard players in Paris, but I certainly am not one of the worst; and seldom have I seen such a result. There was a succession of cannons. Voyons! Five—seven—nine. Ah! I lose myself in the numeration. Mais après tout, play is play, and luck is luck. A man's play is his own; luck is one man's to-day, another's to-morrow. Ce Monsieur and I we meet again, and then, nous

verrons! Do you know, this man remind me of a certain Smitte."

"Smith, I suppose you mean?"

"Well, Smissé, if you prefer it——"

"My dear Vicomte, will you pardon me if I interrupt you; I have a question to ask?"

"Tout à l'heure, mon cher; but first I tell you about this Smitte—Smissé. It was at Paris, nearly three years ago."

"I implore you, stop one minute!" cried the Vicomte's companion, driven to desperation.

"Stop? Ah! Je comprends, I walk too quickly. I suppose you tired with too much dance?"

"Tired? No, no! But, Vicomte, it is about that very 'much dance' that I wish to ask you a question. I should rather say about the young lady I danced with."

"What young lady?"

"Why, that very lovely girl to whom——"

"Cher ami! there were so many lovely girls, and I suppose you danced with more than one of them?"

"Indeed, I only danced with the young lady you introduced me to."

"Oh, I remember."

"And, by-the-bye, I owe you something for our *consummation*."

"Ah, bah!"

"At all events, I owe you thanks for your delicate consideration in that matter."

"Well—your question?"

"I did not catch the name of the young lady and her mother."

"Name? Neither did I; and if I had heard it I should not have remember it. Your English names always escape me when they are other than Smitte—Smissé. Luckily for me, about one of out of twenty English I meet is called Smitte—Smissé."

"Smith, Vicomte, Smith! How you struggle with our fatal *th*! Well, now, to the best of your recollection, are these ladies named Smith?"

"Certainly not, otherwise I remember it. Mais qu'est ce que cela vous fait? You meet them by chance—this mother

and daughter—you find the daughter good dancer, and, for to say the truth, une charmante personne; but to-morrow you depart for Paris, and it is long odds—very long odds—you and she never meet again.”

“Never meet again!” This in a tone of such despondency that the Vicomte exclaimed, “Mais qu’avez vous donc, mon jeune ami?”

“Oh, nothing, nothing.”

“Nothing! Que diable! you have something which make you look on a sudden triste comme un bonnet de nuit.”

“You’re joking, Vicomte.” This with a visible effort at joking himself—“Don’t imagine anything of the sort. I only—Ha! ha! ha!—had a sort of fancy to know the name of this mother and daughter.”

“Say the daughter, and only the mother because she the mother of the daughter—Well, you know my address. Ask of my news if you return to London through Boulogne—and sans doute if I stay here till then I able to tell you their names—Mais am I bête?—I can already tell you something. Yes, I am sure I heard Madame la Maman call Mademoiselle *Juliana*.”

“Juliana! Well, that’s a step towards discovery.”

“Juliana—rather a distinguished name, is it not?—More so than Julie—or as you say Julia.”

From this point the duologue became a monologue sustained by the voluble Vicomte on divers themes which, under other circumstances, would have been amusing enough to his hearer, but which now wearied and oppressed him beyond measure.

Both were staying at the Hôtel des Bains. Arrived at that far-famed, but rather heavy hostelrie, they separated; the gregarious de Foix hastening to the smoking-room in search of any stray Englishman who might be loitering there, while his “jeune ami” mounted, candle in hand, to his highly situated, highly paid bed-room, saying to himself “Juliana! Juliana! Shall we ever meet again?”

The sagacious reader hardly requires to be told that they will meet again.

(To be continued.)



HOGARTH AS AN HISTORIAN.

WHAT is history? Is it a chronicle of battles lost or won, of court intrigues, and great state trials? Or does it consist of a recital of individual acts of courage or villainy? Or again, do biographies of good or bad statesmen constitute history?

And the answer to these questions—and questions like these—is that under whatever name these relations are called, they alone do not constitute the history of a people.

They may form an indispensable part of the history of a nation as one of other nations; but with it, as an individual nation having its own customs, its own institutions, and its own peculiarities, it has very little to do.

The true historian of a nation should give us an accurate picture of the habits, customs, and amusements, not of two or three individuals high in station and in power, but of the whole people, and all the classes into which it may be divided. And while we should not neglect to make some mention of its foreign wars and policy, he should yet, at the same time, remember the small amount of influence they exert upon the vast majority of a population, and curtail his account accordingly.

It would astonish some historians to know how little the Crimean War affected the majority of Englishmen, and that not one Englishman in two really knows anything of Gladstone or Disraeli.

And beyond all doubt, future writers will arise—it may, perhaps, be said that one has arisen already—who will release history from the trammels of conventional usage in which it has so long lain bound.

Then it will be that historians will not only ransack the

archives of public buildings and museums, but will read the stories of the period in which have been enshrined by master hands the habits of the age in which they lived. And no historian of the England of the earlier half of the eighteenth century could neglect to study the novels of Fielding and Smollett, and would derive the greatest assistance in his task from the canvas of Hogarth.

Born of a respectable family, he was at an early age apprenticed to an engraver. Having completed his apprenticeship, and eloped with the daughter of Sir James Thornhill, he first came into public notice by the publication, in 1734, of the "*Harlot's Progress*." We propose within the brief limits of this paper to point out some of the customs, resorts, and amusements of our ancestors, as portrayed on the graphic canvas of Hogarth.

The church was in those days in a most unhappy condition. Her rewards were very unequally divided, and the highest preferment was held by those who possessed Court interest. She had wealth which, if properly distributed, would have amply supplied the needs of every parish parson.

But as it was, London was full of ecclesiastical courtiers; the provinces of ecclesiastical tillers and beggars. So poor were some of the latter as positively to be unable to buy bread, and when they had the good fortune to be invited to a public banquet they ate until they were in danger of suffocation.

The morality of the clergy, too, was at a very low ebb. Those who could afford it frequently repaired to public-houses, where, surrounded by drunken lawyers and politicians, they mixed and quaffed punch until four o'clock in the morning.

In the chambers of death were these men to be seen calmly sipping wine while waiting for the funeral procession to depart. Their love of good living, when they could get it, was notorious, and Hogarth has not unjustly represented the parson at an election entertainment as bending over his plate when all the other guests have finished, and unwigged, wiping the perspiration from his reverend brow.

Within the walls of their churches these men possessed the happy faculty of sending their congregations to sleep. When not thus engaged the behaviour of their flocks was disgraceful.

They either ogled, or took snuff incessantly. A few years before the churches had been restored in the absurd way which is still, no doubt, familiar to many of our readers. The old carved oak benches had been removed, and replaced by hideous horse-boxes and pews five feet high. Perhaps our ancestors thought more of the public-house than the church. It was generally full of guests of every description who sought it as a convenient place for gossiping and smoking. In the picture "Evening," we see a group of this kind, who have removed their perriwigs and substituted for them their pocket handkerchiefs, in order to be better able to enjoy the fumes of tobacco. In fact the inn of 1745 very little differs from that of 1879, except, perhaps, that in the old coaching days inns were more commodiously fitted up for the convenience of passengers.

Fairs were usually thronged with people who came on business, as well as to enjoy themselves. The amusements which at the present day are concomitants of fairs, differ somewhat widely from those in vogue in 1745. Now, a few ginger-bread stalls, childrens' swings, and living skeletons form the principal part of the entertainment set out for the fair-goer. Then, rough platforms were erected and travelling companies entertained large audiences. Gymnasts moved on ropes from one high building to another, and were not uncommonly dashed to pieces in the execution of their feats. The multitude was astonished when it saw a man eating tow and blowing smoke from his mouth. Mr. Punch hangs the hangman and is encored by gaping clowns, while his horse rifles the fool's pockets. Ulysses is seen descending the ladder which leads from the quadruped to the ground, and pickpockets seize their opportunity.

Fairs were, for the most part, frequented by the middle orders of society, and especially by yeomen and farmers. One amusement there was common to high and low, rich and poor. The nobleman and the peasant, the courtier and the butcher, all indiscriminately crowded round the cock-pit.

In the picture "Pit Ticket," we behold the unhappy birds armed with long spurs and preparing to commence or recommence the struggle. Among the spectators are two noblemen one of whom is totally blind. A thief is taking advantage of

this latter circumstance. A carpenter and a butcher appear interested in the scene, while a Frenchman drops snuff into the nose, eyes, and mouth of a man below him, whose face is admirably represented by Hogarth. A dog eyes the cock birds viciously, as though he desires to make short work of them. On the cock-pit is a shadow, which is the reflection of a man drawn up to the ceiling in a basket for having betted more money than he can pay. The interest taken in the fight seems extraordinary. If cock-fighting was a popular amusement, an execution was, at least among the lower orders, even more so. This entertainment, too, could be had cheap, as there was scarcely a day's sun which did not witness the execution of a batch of criminals at Tyburn, and scaffoldings which were placed near the gallows were daily crowded with spectators. The criminal was taken from the prison, and accompanied by mounted javelin-men, was borne on a rough cart with his coffin placed behind him. Frequently, too, a self-constituted preacher took his seat by his side, and dinned into his ears the horrors which awaited him unless he at once repented. The front carriage was occupied by the chaplain, who read the burial office over his living brother. Thus attended, the poor wretch was exposed to the jeers and laughter of a multitude, who, by constant use, had become accustomed to the worst forms of human suffering. He hears the voices of street hawkers, who proclaim in stentorian tones that they sell his last confession, probably penned by some Grub-street scribbler. Orange-women, ginger-beer vendors, dog-dealers, cake-sellers, do not forget to acquaint the public with the nature of their callings. Hypocritical women turn up their eyes to heaven with pious ejaculations, while they are in the act of conveying glasses of negus to their lips, and the hangman sits on the gallows complacently smoking his pipe. It seems extraordinary that only a very few years ago many of our members of Parliament protested against the abolition of capital punishment in public, pleading the good effect such an exhibition had upon the minds of those who came to witness it. Our ancestors had great faith in the value of the severest punishments as deterrents from crime, and Hogarth conducts three of his heroes to the gallows, namely; Tom Idle, Tom Nero, and

Counsellor Silvertongue. Evidence was obtained against criminals in the most iniquitous way. Large rewards were offered to accomplices for the detection of the actual perpetrator, and the wretches who thus swore away the lives of their fellow creatures had drawn them into the commission of some grave act of crime simply with the view to the obtaining of the blood-money. Tom Idle is thus betrayed by a woman of abandoned character and a one-eyed man, both his accomplices. And in spite of these terribly severe punishments vice flourished, and murder and theft were committed in open noon-day.

A greater amusement to the lowest and most debased than the execution, was to be found in the pillory. This consisted of a strong post with two holes at the top, in which the victim's arms were inserted, while his feet did not quite touch the ground. Having been placed in this most uncomfortable position, he was exposed to the missiles of the crowd for perhaps half an hour, and sometimes even longer. Brick-bats, rotten eggs and dirt, were followed by showers of sharp stones, amidst the yells and execrations of the inhuman multitude. Sometimes, indeed, the unhappy wretch was stripped and cruelly scourged before the crowd bore their part in torturing him. Not unfrequently he died before his ruthless tormentors had ended their sport.

Gambling was a vice which in those days extensively prevailed. In one of the pictures which illustrate the career of Rakewell, Hogarth has drawn for us a group of gamblers. Rakewell, who by a wealthy match has just replenished his empty coffers, has staked his all and lost it, and with a countenance convulsed with despairing anguish, is cursing his stars and damning his fate. A highwayman sits beside him with a doleful countenance. He, likewise, has been a loser. A man clad in mourning hides his face in his hands in an agony of shame and repentance. Another miserable wretch, in a fit of impotent frenzy, is attempting to stab some one whom he suspects of having cheated him. The placid face of the usurer at the table contrasts with the visages of the gamblers, whose countenances writhe with conflicting emotions. A fire bursting out in the midst of all this confusion is barely noticed.

Gambling at cards and dice was committed far more publicly formerly than at the present time. Houses where this vice flourished were seldom, if ever, subject to raids of the police. But it is to be feared that in by-ways and secret places it is as vigorous as ever.

Public dinners were in those days invariable precedents of public business, and there was far less order, and guests ate and drank with less regard to decency than at present. Joints of the most substantial kind appeared on the table, and were speedily demolished by the trenchant attacks of reverend divines and learned lawyers. Tumbler after tumbler of coarse ale disappeared with the meat, and strong beer was placed on the table with the cheese. When the repast was ended, the contents of the punch-bowl were extensively circulated round the table. It was a rare sight to behold many of the guests walk steadily from the dining room.

In four scenes of an election contest, Hogarth has well represented the state of things which prevailed a century and a quarter ago. Englishmen then considered an election contest as partaking more of excitement and amusement than, perhaps, they do now. Extensive as is the bribery which, even now, in some constituencies at any rate, extensively prevails, and crafty as are its agents, it was far more gross and unblushing in the days of King George the second. And a dinner was, of course, a necessary part of the affair. In the picture "An Election Entertainment," we behold the worthy Mayor in a complete state of exhaustion after the overwhelming labour of eating his dinner. One of the candidates, who is at this time respectful to all, is listening attentively to an old woman with his arm around her waist while one of the electors has turned the open end of the bowl of his pipe upon his fashionable wig and is puffing furiously, at the same time striking the old woman's head against that of the honourable gentleman. A fellow at the window is emptying a vessel upon a crowd of his political opponents, who retaliated with sticks and stones. Behind the worshipful Mayor, an agent attempts to corrupt a puritanic tailor with a bribe, who rejects it, though threatened with the displeasure of his furious wife. The countenances of most of the guests express maudlin stupidity, those of others, a grim and savage

humour. Fiddlers, harpists, cornet-blowers, flags, and washtubs figure prominently in the piece.

In the picture "Canvassing for Votes," Hogarth has given us a true idea of the bribery which prevailed at this period. Two country innkeepers, agents for their respective parties, are here dropping money into the hands of a rustic freeholder, who, after taking all that he can get from both, will to a certainty vote for the more liberal paymaster. Mr. Punch, one of the candidates, is purchasing trinkets for two ladies in the balcony, and is thus attempting to gain their interest.

While he looks steadfastly towards them, his tool approaches, and delivers him a letter on bended knee. The porter has brought a quantity of printed bills for circulation, intimating that Mr. Punch's theatre is open. In the background a large number of men are endeavouring to force their way into the Crown Inn to attack with sticks members of the opposite party who are assembled there. A man on a cross-beam at the end of the Crown signpost is endeavouring to cut through the beam, not thinking that when he has accomplished this end he will infallibly fall with it. The landlord, enraged at the attack upon his house, is firing his blunderbuss upon the crowd. A cobbler and a barber are engaged in a warm political disputation. The borough here represented is a small one, as we can easily perceive in the third picture, "The Polling." The hustings are crowded with representatives of both parties. A veteran who has lost two arms and a leg in the service of his country is tendering his oath to the clerk. The statute provided that the right hand should be laid upon the book, and he creates considerable amusement by placing his stump upon it; and the wits question the legality of the oath. Behind him is a deaf and dumb individual, who is instructed by a man with a shackle round his leg which way he is to vote. Behind him, again, is a wretched-looking creature who bears the appearance of having been dragged from his death-bed. One of the candidates eyes the whole scene with great complacency as though he is certain of the result of the contest, while the other, who sees that his cause is hopeless and is calculating the cost, frantically scratches his head, and stamps his foot, and damns the expense. The fourth picture represents a scene

familiar enough forty years ago, but now very uncommon. The member is exhibited in an arm-chair, borne on the shoulders of his jubilant constituents. He does not appear to relish his perilous position, and a lady in a church-yard close by is so appalled by it that she sinks back in a swoon. A monkey riding on a bear, with a carbine at his side, appears to enjoy the fun, although the carbine accidentally goes off and kills a sweep who is seated upon a neighbouring wall. The owner of these two animals is vigorously pommeling his unfortunate donkey. A couple of excited electors are busily engaged in fighting, while the Duke of Newcastle, who was present at most elections and became on that account somewhat unpleasantly notorious, surveys the scene from a window. Empty beer-barrels roll about the street, and astonished pigs tumble headlong into a brook which runs by the side of the road.

Sherlock, writing to a French friend, tells him he should visit England if it were only to witness an election contest and a cock-fight. Hogarth has given us representations of both, and we are sure of their accuracy.

Isn't he a true historian? While we are studying his pictures we almost seem to be living in those days. We go to church and hear the droning voice of the divine, we see his Majesty's grenadiers marching to Finchley, and his Majesty's counsel upset in a coach.

We behold the peer eaten up with vanity and pride of birth, and his son knocking down money like nine-pins, and leading a mad, dissipated life.

We watch excited citizens fighting with fists or bludgeons, and see the Prince of Wales surveying the Lord Mayor's show.

All this, and more. Here for the present we pause. We propose in a future paper to deal with Hogarth as a moralist. With this in view, we have omitted—except very cursorily—to make mention of Tom Idle and Frank Goodchild, of Rakewell and Silvertongue. And we believe it will be seen that however we regard him—as a moralist, an historian, or a caricaturist, we shall still love and admire the honest face and beaming eyes of the great English painter.

W. J. MORGAN.



SWEET LOVE'S ABODE.

My spirit sought sweet Love's abode,
And triumphed over space and time ;
The poppy in the wheat-field glowed,
The bees were in the scented lime.

My Love was in the roses' shade,
Her curving lips were redder far
Than any blooming rose displayed,
Or crimson-tinted corals are.

I stretched forth longing arms of air
To clasp her to my anxious breast ;
Alas ! my soul was only there—
My faithful love was unconfessed.

Above her head the lilac swung,
Its fragrance filled the summer hours,
And countless sounds of nature sung
A hymn to honour Beauty's powers.

I floated down the balmy wind,
And oft her blushing cheek caressed.
Alas ! her heart I could not find,
My faithful love was unconfessed.

From dreams of bliss my spirit came,
And with it rarest perfume brought ;
It burned within me—as a flame
From scented rose and lilac caught.

FRANCIS H. HEMERY.



MARTINDALE'S MONEY.

A NOVEL.

By the Author of "Old as the Hills," "Kate Savage," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE MAJOR'S LAST APPEARANCE.

THE election had become a thing of the past. Mr. Peckham had kept his seat in spite of the frantic efforts of the Conservative party, and as a consequence, Alderman Chadwick had lost his bet. It was hard on the alderman, for he and his friends had stuck to their candidate under discouraging circumstances, and Martindale's absence at the last and most critical moment was a crowning disaster for his supporters. Many of them spoke of him as if he had purposely endeavoured to break his neck upon the eve of the contest; but to the man who is hovering between life and death it matters nothing how the world wags, or what criticisms it may be passing upon his character and conduct. The small world of Hexbury might say or think what it pleased for many a day whilst George Martindale's spirit was wandering through new regions—the weird and misty world of delirium. In the meantime people might probably have lost interest in him and his affairs, but that it was thought that for much that had transpired a sequel might be found in the approaching trial of Ned Gill at the assizes. It was rumoured that there would be "disclosures," and disclosures are always welcome, especially in dull neighbourhoods.

Her Majesty's judges arrived at the old city in due course. The Sheriff met them with his flunkeys and his four grey horses. The heralds (in the garb of the county police) blew their trumpets. The judges attended service at the cathedral,

the commission was opened, and then on the following day they got to business. The Crown Court was crowded; the gallery with the public, the bench with various persons of importance, chief amongst them the sheriff, exhibiting the regulation amount of shirt front and suit of black velvet. The gentleman of the long robe were abundantly represented, presenting that pleasing variety of nose and whisker for which Charles Dickens considered the Bar of England was so justly famous. There was a wide choice of advocates upon this circuit; some of the solicitors considered that the quantity was somewhat out of proportion to the quality, and possibly this was a view shared by Ned Gill's adviser, who had "specially retained" Mr. Marmaduke Wilkins, who belonged to another circuit, and was a shining light at the Old Bailey and the Middlesex Sessions.

Mr. Wilkins had arrived, and as of course his numerous engagements would require his return to town at the earliest possible moment, it was thought that the Judge would suit his convenience by taking his case at an early period.

The bar crowded in to hear Mr. Wilkins. They did not think much of him, of course. Possibly they wondered why a man should pay a round sum to bring Mr. Wilkins down to Hexbury when there were so many eligible and cheaper men upon the spot. If they were not great advocates, these young men were splendid critics. Wilkins could talk—they owned that, and sometimes he could stick to a witness pretty well, but still he was not good form; it was ridiculous for the public to think much of a man who resorted to such hammer-and-tongs advocacy; thumping the table, smacking one hand into the other and throwing himself about, coupled with facial contortions—thrusting out his chin, drawing down his lips and making his eyes start out of his head—it was monstrous that such stage tricks should command success. But so it was, and there could be no manner of doubt that Mr. Marmaduke Wilkins commanded "fees."

The Grand Jury had returned a true bill against Gill, and presently the Judge mentioned the case.

"Mr. Wilkins, I understand you defend. You will be glad, probably, if the case can be taken to-day?" inquired his lordship.

"Indeed, my lord, I shall be very glad, if it will be convenient to your lordship. There are not many witnesses, and I shall endeavour not to occupy the Court for any length of time."

Thus spoke Mr. Wilkins, with accents of the deepest respect. Then the learned counsel for the prosecution uprose and stated that the facts were very simple, and thereupon it was decided to take the case after luncheon.

A good many of the people in the gallery did not adjourn lest they should lose their seats, and there was a buzz of excited conversation in the Court as the minutes during which the Sheriff was entertaining his lordship went by. Learned counsel who had briefs came fussily in and out; learned counsel who had no briefs were as important in their demeanour as if they knew they were going to have some presently, with the exception of some few depressed men who had gone the circuit many times already, and who were beginning to regard it as a hopeless tour. These read their newspapers, and were prepared to criticise Mr. Wilkins with some bitterness. Presently Gill's solicitor was seen to push his way through the throng with a look of anxiety upon his face. He looked wildly round for Mr. Wilkins, but that gentleman had not yet returned. His junior, however, whose duties were nominal, was at his post, and the prosecuting counsel was also ready. The solicitor went hurriedly forward to his junior counsel and whispered in his ear; the young man turned round with dismay upon his countenance.

"By Jove, you don't mean it! Where is Wilkins? He ought to know this at once," he exclaimed; and at that moment Mr. Marmaduke Wilkins appeared. There was a rapid conversation in subdued tones, whilst the eyes of the spectators were intently fixed on the three heads which were brought into such suggestive proximity. Then there was a cry of "Silence! silence!" and the bar uprose. The Judge, followed by sheriff and chaplain, entered and took his seat.

"Call Edward Gill," said the clerk of arraigns.

"On bail?" inquired the Judge.

"Yes, my lord," said the prosecuting counsel.

Outside the Court the usher was heard sonorously calling

"Edward Gill! Edward Gill!! Edward Gill!!!" but there was no answer.

"Call the sureties," said the clerk of arraigns.

The names of the persons who had become responsible for the accused's appearance were shouted, but again there was no response.

"This is very irregular," remarked the Judge, who was getting impatient. Then, observing the whispered conference between the defendant's solicitor and counsel, "Can you explain this, Mr. Wilkins?"

"My lord," replied Mr. Wilkins, "I have just received information which takes me entirely by surprise; and I am bound to tell your lordship that the solicitor who instructs myself and my learned friend has been searching all the morning for the defendant, and in point of fact, from what has just been ascertained, it is believed that he must have left the town."

The learned Judge looked very stern.

"It will be a serious thing for his sureties if that is so," he said. "Is anything known of this by the prosecution?"

"My lord, this is the first hint that we have had of such a thing," said the prosecuting counsel, jumping up.

"Your client, the prosecutor, is in attendance, I presume?" inquired the Judge.

"Yes, my lord, and my other witnesses also," was the reply.

"Let the prosecutor go in the witness box," said the Judge; and forthwith Major Munns stepped into prominence once more.

In answer to questions, the Major stated that he had seen Gill three or four days previously in the street, and that he had no idea what had now become of him. There was a vindictiveness in his tone which effectually removed any suspicions which might have arisen as to a compromise of the charge.

"That will do. I cannot have further time wasted," observed the Judge. "The recognizances will be estreated."

With these words, the case which had been looked for with such interest was nipped in the bud. There were to be no disclosures after all. Numbers of the audience left the court

in disgust, whilst two or three persons went eagerly to inform Gill's sureties of what was about to befall them. There was some little relish in conveying such intelligence. Mr. Marmaduke Wilkins went back to town forthwith with his fees in his pocket, and a conviction that, regarding the prospects of the case, Gill had perhaps acted wisely in giving trial by jury a wide berth. The Major left the Assize Court with a scowl upon his brow.

There was in fact nothing to keep him longer in the neighbourhood, and it became necessary to think of his future arrangements. In connection with these the existence of his wife could not be absolutely ignored. She was still at Blatherwick Park. His own funds were exhausted and there was a reckoning at the hotel which had assumed a pressing character. He knew that George Martindale had not been removed from Dr. Singleton's, and therefore he thought he need not hesitate to return to Blatherwick Park, now that it suited his arrangements to do so. After a little reflection, he hired a cab and told the man to drive him there. The house wore a gloomy and deserted look as the cab drew up at the main entrance. The Major got out, and then, in pursuance of a sudden idea, he told the cabman to drive outside the lodges and wait for him.

Then he went in, and came face to face with his wife, who had her bonnet on. Mrs. Munns at once sank down upon a hall-chair and produced her handkerchief.

"Now then, what is the matter?" said the Major, harshly.

"I—I was coming to look for you, Bayford; I was going to ask for the carriage and drive into Hexbury. I could not wait any longer," replied Mrs. Munns, nervously.

"You need not trouble yourself," responded her husband.

"What am I to do?" pleaded Mrs. Munns, "You have left me for days and days, and I cannot stay here always, and the servants begin to behave strangely, as if I ought not to be here, and I really do not think I ought whilst poor George is away from the house and lying at death's door."

"Come upstairs," said Major Munns, savagely, "don't sit there whimpering where everybody can see you."

He led the way into a sitting-room and his wife followed him meekly.

"Now," he said, when he had closed the door, "how much money have you got?"

"I have only two or three pounds," was the answer.

"Very well, you must give them to me, and I will go and make arrangements. I will take rooms, and let you know so that you may follow. We cannot stay here, of course."

"But can't you take me with you?"

"No, I can't; but I will let you know where to come. I will telegraph, most likely from the old quarters."

"But what about the trial?"

"There won't be any trial," growled the Major, and he now helped himself to the contents of the purse which Mrs. Munns had reluctantly taken from her pocket.

"Then you will be sure to write or telegraph," said his wife, as he handed back the purse with only a little silver in it.

"Yes, yes, of course," he answered, but he seemed to speak rather absently.

"It is very awkward for me remaining here," pleaded Mrs. Munns.

"Nonsense, you will be comfortable enough—that is, it won't matter for a day or two longer."

"Won't it?" repeated his wife, doubtfully.

Her husband did not reply. He had gone to the side-board and was looking for some wine. Presently he found some sherry to which he helped himself freely, but still in an absent manner as if debating some new idea.

Mrs. Munns watched him half suspiciously.

"You will try and get the old rooms at Pimlico then?" she inquired.

"Yes, the Pimlico rooms," replied her husband, gazing out of window. He looked at his watch presently. "I must go," he said.

"Couldn't you put it off until to-morrow? I am sure I had several things to say, but you have flurried me so by coming and going in this way," said Mrs. Munns, with more spirit than she had hitherto shown.

"I can't stay in this house after what has happened," returned her husband, impatiently. "No man with any self-respect could do so."

"But why not? What *has* happened?"

He made a petulant gesture, and took up his hat.

"Good-bye," he said, and stooping, brushed a kiss upon his wife's faded cheek. It was an unusual thing for him to do, so much so that the poor lady was almost bewildered by the attention. Before she could sufficiently recover herself to put further questions, he had left the room and was crossing the hall.

She called out something about his clothes or his portmanteau, but he replied that all he wanted was at the hotel at Hexbury, and that she could bring the rest.

This comforted her a little, but it did not entirely remove the doubts which had sprung up in her mind as to the Major's intentions. Yet it was many days before she realised that Major Munns did not intend to come back for her at all.

CHAPTER XXX.

FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE.

THE news of the accident which had befallen Martindale came as a shock to Julia Hawkley. It was not that she was overwhelmed with anguish at the thought of her lover's suffering and peril. Of course, the occurrence was to be deplored on every ground, but chiefly in that it had taken place at such a highly inconvenient time. If it were in the book of fate that Martindale must be thrown from his carriage and injured almost unto death, she would have preferred that the event should have taken place either sooner or later any time, in fact, rather than at this particular period.

Directly the Colonel heard of what had happened, he went over to Dr. Singleton's, and anon returned with a very serious face.

"It's deuced unlucky—it certainly is deuced unlucky," he remarked to his daughter, after he had given some explana-

tions of the occurrence. Nor did he by his manner seek to conceal from her that the "unluckiness" existed not so much as to the injured man himself, as with regard to the house of Hawkley.

"Do you think," asked Julia, "that I ought to go and see if—if I can do anything?" She was looking very pale, but there was none of that anxiety in her manner which one would have expected under the circumstances from a woman whose heart was wholly given to her lover. "I don't think I could be of much use. I don't understand sick-rooms, and that kind of thing," she added, uncertainly.

"You can't do any good by going there at present, at any rate," her father replied. "He is quite insensible, and that tall girl who has shut herself up there seems to be doing everything that is required."

So Julia stayed at home.

The next evening came intelligence which touched her perhaps more deeply. Her father came back from Hexbury, and told her that George Martindale had lost the election.

"It is most infernally unfortunate, that is what it is," said Colonel Hawkley this time; and Julia's feelings were such that for many moments she could say nothing.

The Colonel paced up and down the room with a flushed and perplexed countenance.

"And that is not the worst of it," he said, presently. "You know these rumours I told you about? Well, of course, now the—the poor fellow is disabled, people are speaking out more than ever. I believe that man Munns is at the bottom of it, and in some way or other the people are getting to believe that there is a hitch somewhere, and that in point of fact Martindale is not entitled to this property, and all the rest of it."

"But it cannot be true; it would be dreadful," said Miss Hawkley, aghast,

"Yes," repeated her father, "as you say, it would be dreadful; and one would really have to consider, you know, what is right and proper under the circumstances."

Julia was silent.

Her father glanced at her uneasily, as he continued his walk to and fro.

"One thing is certain—in fact, two things are certain. In the first place, the wedding will have to be put off, for Martindale is no better; indeed, he recognises no one, and is in a most precarious state, the doctor says. And in the second place, we can't stay here after the time we originally fixed. The term is up and the rent is not paid, and those confounded agents told me only to-day that the house is let, and they must have possession."

"But what are we to do?" asked Julia, angrily.

"I don't know," replied the Colonel.

"And Sir Marcus had arranged to come the day after to-morrow."

"Yes."

"Had not we better put him off?"

"No, I think not," said her father, slowly, "I think we had better let him come. He knows we were going to leave soon and we can explain, if necessary."

Julia had called at Dr. Singleton's that morning, but she had not seen Martindale; she had not asked to do so, and had had but a brief interview with Hicks, whose time, now that the house contained two invalids, was amply occupied.

The next day, Miss Hawkley went again. The house seemed hushed and oppressive. A newly-hired servant showed her into a room upon the ground-floor; here she stood waiting in silence, until presently, she was startled by the sound of hurried, incoherent words spoken in the room across the passage. The voice died away in rapid mutterings; but Julia was very pale, she knew what these sounds meant; it was a new experience, and it dismayed her. She lacked to a singular degree the courage which most of her sex possess where pain and illness are to be coped with. Perhaps in a little time she might have acquired the necessary strength; but she shrank, as all self-loving natures do shrink, from taking the first lesson in this new knowledge with which she had never until now been brought face to face.

Hicks came in a few seconds later.

"Is he any better?—I heard him talking just now," said Julia, with more real concern than she had shown upon her first visit.

"He do talk dreadful, poor gentleman. The doctor is afraid as there is brain-fever, or something," said Hicks, shaking her head.

"Can I do anything, do you think?"

"No, ma'am ; I don't think as you can," replied Hicks : "we've got a regular nurse coming down from London this afternoon."

"And who is attending to him now?"

"Well, Miss Grace, mostly ; but, poor young lady, she can't keep it up—and there's the old gentleman upstairs. Altogether it's a dreadful time," said Hicks, applying the corner of her apron to her eyes.

"Would you like to see him, ma'am ; perhaps you might step in for a minute."

"No," replied Julia, hastily ; "I don't think I will, it might disturb him."

"I don't think as it would do that," remarked Hicks, almost dryly. "Shall I ask Miss Grace if she can step out and speak to you?"

"No," said Miss Hawkey, nervously, "I will not take her from her kind duties."

"Yes, she do her duty, certainly, if it is her duty, poor young lady," remarked Hicks, smoothing down her apron again. No one would have thought this worthy woman capable of conveying censure by delicate implication ; yet there was something in her tone or manner which made Miss Hawkey's colour rise. But there was nothing further to be said, and she went away.

Sir Marcus arrived at The Cedars soon afterwards. He wore the sable suit of a widower, but his spirits were good—he was even jaunty at times ; at others, Julia found his gaze resting upon her with an expression which at first rather puzzled her. He had a way of taking her white hand and putting it between his own. He had, too, a trick of alluding to himself as an old fogey in a tone which seemed to invite a contradiction.

Shortly after his arrival the Colonel explained to his old friend the necessity for their departure from The Cedars.

"Of course," he said, "we thought the marriage would have taken place before our term expired ; and so it would have

done but for this most unfortunate accident of Martindale's. You see how we are placed?"

"Sir Marcus intimated that he quite saw the position of affairs.

"You see," the Colonel went on, "under all the circumstances, it is an unpleasant state of things for Julia. I am afraid I should be bound as a father to make a few inquiries before, in point of fact, there is any renewal of intimacy."

"You must be very careful," suggested the other. "I suppose she is fond of him?"

"Oh, yes; no doubt—that is to say, to a certain extent, Julia is a sensible girl, you know."

He looked at his visitor rather curiously as he paid this tribute to his daughter's character.

Sir Marcus made no comment upon it, but before he rose from the table—they were sipping their after-dinner wine—he suggested that Miss Hawkley and her father might take up their abode with him at his town-house until their plans for the future were settled.

Colonel Hawkley accepted the offer with effusion. In the days of the late Lady Gregory such an invitation would never have been even hinted at. The deceased had been an invalid and a person of peculiar views. Hospitality was never part of her system, and she had left her husband to entertain, if he were so minded, anywhere rather than at his own house.

But times had changed, and Sir Marcus was a free man now. So a few days later he took his friends back to town with him.

Miss Hawkley wrote a formal note to Grace Summer before she left The Cedars, explaining the absolute necessity for her departure, which she would nevertheless have endeavoured to delay if she could have felt that by remaining she could have been of any service. The note was cold and stiff, and yet it was the result of careful composition on the part of the writer, for Julia did not yet know in what light it might be necessary to consider the epistle hereafter.

Grace thought little or nothing about it. Her hands were full. Upstairs lay the old man growing weaker and more querulous day by day. Downstairs, in the improvised bedroom from which it had been impossible to move him, lay the

young man battling with the fever into which the shock and injuries had thrown him. There were times when Grace was forbidden to enter the room. It was a case for trained nurses, the doctor said, and the trained nurses were there. In the doctor's absence, however, they gladly availed themselves of the assistance of this young lady of the house, who seemed to have become a nurse without the training. No one's eye was so quick as hers to discover what the patient needed for his greater ease and comfort—no one's hand so soothing and welcome to the burning brow and nervous, twitching hands.

There was a time when it seemed that the battle was almost hopeless; it could but end in one way where the forces were so unequal. Flesh and blood cannot fight for ever, and it seemed that George Martindale must yield then and there to the grim enemy who sooner or later overpowers us all. But it was not so. The crisis passed—whilst one at least watched with baited breath. Then came the slow and weary progress towards recovery. Day after day went by and found him only creeping back to health again. And all through this time Grace tended him with unflinching care and patience.

* * * * *

There came a day in the early spring when the air seemed soft with the promise of summer-time. The shadows of winter were fast receding, and Wick Heath lay green and peaceful in the sunshine. Far overhead the black rooks circled; yet higher the fluffy clouds sailed over the calm, blue sky.

Propped up by pillows, George Martindale sat upon a sofa by the window of the room at Wick Heath Academy, of which he had been so long an inmate. He gazed out upon the birds, the clouds, the sunshine, with those inexplicable feelings which every man has experienced who has been hovering by the borders of the silent land, and who can scarce believe yet awhile that he has been rescued from his peril.

No one can pass through the ordeal of a great illness and come forth from it quite the same man as in his former days. The nearness to the grave, the haunting shadows and grim forms conjured up by delirium, cannot be easily or soon forgotten.

Martindale was changed. Outwardly he looked the wreck

of the man he once had been ; inwardly too he felt that he was very different from his former self. His head had been shaved, and now there were facilities for a phrenological examination which had never before existed. His blue eyes were sunken deep in their sockets, his cheeks hollow and colourless, his figure gaunt and stooping.

He was reading, or pretending to read a newspaper, with intervals during which he looked out across the far-stretching heath. Presently he put down the paper and fixed his eyes upon Grace Summer, who sat quietly working opposite to him.

"I am going to-morrow, Grace. You know that?" he said, after a time.

"Yes, I know you have made up your mind," she answered, without raising her eyes.

"I must tell you something now, because it won't do to put it off any longer."

"Is it something pleasant?" she asked calmly.

"Yes, I hope so." So answering he put his head back upon his pillow and looked upwards at the gently-moving clouds. For a time he was silent.

"You are not going to reveal this secret after all then?" she said presently.

"I had lost the thread," he answered. "'Like as a dream, when one awaketh,' those words are running in my head. They just describe what I feel. They are in the Psalms, are they not? Grace, I owe you a great deal of money!"

"Of money? What do you mean?"

He pointed towards a coat, hanging on a peg behind the door.

"Is that the coat I was wearing on the night they brought me in here? Well, if it is, will you in consideration for my shaky limbs, bring me the papers that are in the side pocket?"

She got up and did as he had asked.

He took the papers rather nervously.

"I have a sneaking feeling that I am going to be dramatic and ridiculous," he said, with a slight laugh. "I want to avoid that, above all things. Therefore, Grace, forgive me if I come abruptly to the point. The fact is, Blatherwick Park,

and the land and money, and all the rest of it, belong to you."

She looked at him half-bewildered, yet tenderly, almost thinking that even now he was possessed by a sick man's fancy or delusion.

"George, you are talking nonsense," she said, laying her work upon her lap.

"Not a bit of it," he answered, with more energy. "I do not want to pile up the agony; it is the simple truth that our respected and departed uncle did not intend me to inherit his property; he meant it for you."

"Then I wonder he did not say so in his will."

"He made several wills. He made on an average at least one a year. So far as I can form an opinion he made them alternately in your favour and mine."

"Your turn came last, at any rate," she said, indifferently, for it still seemed to her that he was talking nonsense.

For answer he unfolded the paper which she had handed him and read as follows:—

"Instructions for my will. Revoke all previous wills. Give and bequeath all my real and personal property to my niece, Grace Summer, spinster, for her absolute use and control free from the engagements of any future husband. December 30th.

"M. MARTINDALE.

"NOTE.—*Mr. Croft will put this in proper form and bring it over to be signed as soon as possible.*

"M. M."

They sat silent for a few moments when he had finished reading. Grace had grown paler now; but a slight flush had risen to Martindale's cheek.

"But that is not a will," she said presently.

"No, not legally, doubtless; but morally I think we are just as much bound by it as if the old man had called up a couple of his servants and made them sign their names as witnesses, which was all the law required to make this an effective will."

"But it is not an effective will, and there is an end of it."

"I intend to make the property over to you in furtherance of the old gentleman's intentions," he said, lightly. "It is not a freak or a fancy. My mind was made up—yes, I can honestly

say my mind was made up—before this illness, which you have pulled me through.”

“We will talk of all this another time,” she said, quietly, taking up her work again. “Invalids are not to be allowed to excite themselves with such Quixotic notions.”

“We will talk of it now,” he answered firmly, “once and for all. I mean what I say.”

“But suppose,” she said, seeing that the argument was not to be avoided, “suppose I refuse to accept this kind offer.” Her lip trembled a little as she finished, and she turned her gaze toward the outer world.

“You cannot, and you will not,” he said.

“But I think I can, and I will.”

“Very well, Grace, we shall see.”

“But George, you will forgive my saying that there was a time when you would not have taken such a foolish view of things. At any rate, let us consider the topic abandoned for a time.”

“Wait a moment, I must tell you all now I have begun.”

Then, with quick and nervous sentences he told her the story of the temptation which the Major had held out to him, of the manner in which he had dallied with it, knowing enough from the cunningly-incomplete revelations to make him in his own interests dread a fuller knowledge; then the sequel, which was to be found in Ned Gill's disclosures. He kept nothing back. It was a confession bitter to make, but George Martindale's pride had fallen.

“What is it Grace? ‘Open confession is good for the soul,’ that is the saying, is it not? Well, I think it is true. I feel better now,” he ended, with a faint laugh.

“You do not look so,” she said, rising and arranging his pillows.

There was a pause after she had resumed her seat.

“You forget that there is somebody else interested in your new scheme,” she said.

“Not in the least; it will not affect her,” he replied promptly.

“George, you are talking in riddles,” she said, with a heightened colour.

He laughed, and raised himself upon his elbow.

"You know I had a letter this morning?"

"Yes."

"It was from Julia Hawkley. She thinks, under all the circumstances, that our engagement had better be at an end. I agree with her."

"But, George, you ought not to——"

"What, Grace?"

"To—to take it in that way."

"Why not? 'If she be not fair to me, what care I how fair she be?' I have a fancy that the young and gay Sir Marcus Gregory will lead her to the altar. I shall keep my eye upon the announcements of fashionable marriages."

"I do not think you ought to joke about it in that way," Grace said, gravely. "Surely you loved her?"

"I once thought I did. I know now that I did not. I have only loved one woman—at least, that is not what I was going to say."

She raised her eyes swiftly to his face.

He bent forward, moved by an irresistible impulse, and caught her hand.

"Grace, do you mean to say that after all that has happened you still care at all about a man who has treated you so badly?"

She tried to draw her hand away. Then, failing, she looked him fairly in the face and gave her answer.

"George, I have always loved you, and, if you care to know it, I think I always shall."

* * * * *

The rest might be easily guessed. Julia Hawkley, having been a visitor at Sir Marcus Gregory's house, in the course of a few months became its mistress. The arrangement suited both herself and her father as no arrangement yet had suited them. Lady Gregory may be seen in the London season at the fashionable places, at the fashionable hours. She is very handsome and always richly dressed. Her white-haired husband is proud of her, and she, if not proud of him, is at least proud of the position and wealth which he has given her. Major Munns never returned to his disconsolate wife. Pensioned by George Martindale, she is in reality a great gainer

in many ways by her husband's desertion. Yet Mrs. Munns never ceases to lament her spouse as if he were the noblest and the best of men.

Jim Travers, after a good deal of travelling, came home again, looking sunburnt and by no means broken-hearted. It is far from improbable that he will marry a young lady who long ago showed a disposition to console him, and supply a place in his affections which another had not cared to fill.

That other is well content with her lot as the wife of the man to whom her heart had long ago been given, in spite of the indifference with which for a while that gift had been regarded. George Martindale knows better now. He candidly owns his folly in the past, and admits that he is lucky beyond his merits. Whatever there may have been of goodness or worth beneath the surface of his character has been developed and brought out by the unconscious influence of his wife. He is rich, as every man must be who has for his life-companion a pure-minded, loving, and unselfish woman; and beyond this he still remains well-endowed with this world's goods. Blatherwick Park has been brought to the hammer, but another home amidst other scenery has been purchased.

"I have made a good bargain, Grace, in getting you for my wife, and at the same time obviating all questions as to my moral duties, so far as the property is concerned." George Martindale often says this, or something like it, in after years, and his wife's answer is generally of a stereotyped fashion.

"I am glad you think it a good bargain. We are both satisfied with it," she replies. And this is true.

"Seeing his faults and wayward moods—seeing and owning that there are men better than he—she loves him always with the most constant affection." Thus wrote a master amongst novelists when taking leave of Pendennis and his wife. And you, who, in the words of the same writer, *"perceive in every man's life the maimed happiness, the frequent falling, the bootless endeavour, the struggle of right and wrong . . . knowing how mean the best of us is,"* may, perhaps, refrain from harsh judgment of one who certainly cannot claim to be a hero, but "only a man and a brother."

THE END.





STOLEN KISSES.

“ Kiss her gently, but be sly ;
Kiss her when there's no one by ;
Steal your kiss, for then 'tis meetest,
Stolen kisses are the sweetest.”

I've had a turn at thinking,
And my thinking comes to this,
That folks who frown at winking,
And would criminate a kiss,
Must be most melancholy
With their straightened lip and eye,
For there's nothing half so jolly
As a kiss upon the sly.

In secret osculation,
There's an ecstasy divine,
A satisfied sensation,
A charm I can't define—
Especially when prudish
Prim Pa's and Ma's are nigh,
Who'd faint at figures nudish,
And at—kisses on the sly.

In winter-time what fun is
Flirtation in a sleigh,
What chance for pilfered honeys
As we pelt upon our way !
And when to festooned rafter
The berried branch we tie,
With lots of love and laughter,
What kisses on the sly !

I've had a turn at thinking :
One thing I thought was this—
That 'tis very charming rinking
With a mirthful, merry Miss ;
But freakful is a roller,
And sad a maiden's cry,
Though should she slip, console her
With a kiss upon the sly.

A maid must be capricious
Who feigns she doesn't know
That kissing is delicious,
Nor care to prove it so ;
But that, of course, is proper,
When anybody's by—
She'd like you though to stop her,
And kiss her on the sly.

HORACE L. NICHOLSON.





A COUPLE OF GEESE.

CHAPTER .I

SNOW—snow everywhere—nothing but snow. Pure and white and soft in the country, clothing the shivering trees with a warm garment, and covering the desolate earth with a mantle of beauty. A girl stood dreamily watching the feathery flakes from the window of an old country-house; there was a wistful look in her soft eyes, as if they saw beyond the snowstorm and out into the country beyond.

"You will get cold if you stay at that window," said a voice from within the room. "Come to the fire, child."

The girl obeyed with a little sigh, as if she were loth to tear herself away from the prospect outside.

"I can't think what makes you so quiet this afternoon, Nellie," Mrs. Fanshawe went on; "you have not spoken a word for the last half-hour. It is so dull when Ronald is out, I'm sure I don't know what I should do if he were not here."

No answer from Nellie, only an almost imperceptible shrinking of the slight figure and another little sigh.

"What time did Carry say they would be home?"

This time Nellie felt obliged to answer her stepmother.

"At four," she said, with an involuntary glance at the clock on the mantelpiece, which pointed to a quarter-past five.

Mrs. Fanshawe's tone changed at once.

"Inconsiderate," she murmured. "They will be late for dinner, and Carry knows my doctor orders me to have my meals with the greatest regularity."

"They were late yesterday," said Nellie, in a low voice; she was sitting on a low stool on the rug, her hands clasped round her knees, her eyes fixed on the glowing cinders, in

which she saw just now a cherished castle in the air crumbling away.

"Carry is so selfish," Mrs. Fanshawe went on, in a plaintive tone. "I cannot imagine why she wanted to drive over to Ruston again to-day; it is very unreasonable. How is it you did not go, Nellie?"

"I had no wish to go, mamma, thank you."

But the girl's eyes filled with tears as she spoke, and the delicate lips quivered in their effort to speak indifferently.

Mrs. Fanshawe half raised herself on the couch, and looked at her stepdaughter, then sank back with a sigh; she saw a change in Nellie's face, a listless, weary look, which had been there only of late. Mrs. Fanshawe was not utterly heartless, she was only thoroughly selfish.

"It is a great charge to have that girl on my hands entirely," she said, in an inaudible tone. "So inconsiderate of her father to die and leave me sole guardian—but there, it is just like a man, so selfish and thoughtless. What am I to do with her if she is ill? She looks very delicate. Nellie," she said aloud, "if Ronald and Carry drive out again to-morrow, you must go too. I cannot have you stay indoors all day; you never used to do it, and as John goes too, there will be a much more comfortable party with you; three cannot talk together. Besides——," she hesitated, and then went on: "I think Ronald admires Carry, do you know, and it would be a very good match, they are so well suited to each other; there is a certain likeness between them, I think. I am quite glad I invited Carry Willmore. You see, if Ronald marries her, she will be quite content to live here in Merton, and it would be much more cheerful for me. Of course you will marry some day, and then, if Ronald took a wife who had a fancy to live in London half the year, what should I do by myself? I think your father ought to have made him promise always to take care of me, he has had so much done for him, though he was only my eldest brother's son after all."

Nellie looked up with a glance of astonishment.

"There, don't look ready to eat me up, child. I know, of course, that *legally* speaking, as Ronald was the elder brother's son, he has a right to that splendid property, and all that kind of thing; but I think it is very unfair, nevertheless, and

I shall never see why, because I am a woman, the property should not come to me, nor why I should be obliged to content myself with this old house and a very moderate income, while my brother's son inherits Merton Hall, the finest estate in the county. And I must say I think things ought to have been different."

"We have plenty to live upon, mamma," said Nellie, softly.

"Well, you may think so, my dear, but *I* do not. Comfort is all very well, but it is too tantalising to see Ronald living at Merton Hall, and really not valuing his privileges at all, while I am obliged to put up with this old place, which is not worth half as much. However, if he marries Carry, it will be some consolation to me; for as she is my husband's niece, I shall feel that it is not out of the family after all. I thought perhaps he might have married you; but I suppose, as you have known each other all your lives, it is hopeless. Well, well, everything always goes wrong with me. If you had been there, it would have been to me as if my own child had it."

A crimson flush came into Nellie's face.

"How can you talk of such things?" she began, indignantly, and then she paused; her quick ear had caught the sound of wheels in the avenue. She covered her face in her hands, and tried to control the agitation which her stepmother's words had called up. Then the door was thrown open, and the absent trio came in. Nellie's face was perfectly calm, but it was very white now that the flush had passed away.

Carry Willmore's beauty was an acknowledged thing; every charm that nature could bestow had been lavished upon her. Golden hair, dreamy blue eyes, a peach-like complexion, and a very winning smile, it was a beauty that almost dazzled you. She came like a flash of sunlight into the home-like, fire-lighted drawing-room. And truly she had never looked so lovely as now; her large, dark purple velvet hat set off her fairness, and brought out the peach and rose tints of her face. She was very graceful, and her well-fitting dress, of the same colour as her hat, was just perfect.

Ronald Merton and John Rothesay (another cousin of Mrs. Fanshawe, who was, like Miss Willmore, staying at the house

for a few weeks) both thought alike on the subject of Carry's beauty, it was very evident.

"You should have come with us, Nellie," cried Carry, impetuously. "You foolish girl, to stay moping at home. Why could you not come? Aunt Sarah, you should make her go out; she looks as pale as possible. Of course, with your bad health, I can understand any one staying indoors; but for Nellie, it is absurd."

Now, there were two things in this speech that annoyed Mrs. Fanshawe. One was that she hated to be called "Aunt Sarah"—she thought "Sarah" a vulgar name, and preferred to be called "Aunt Fanshawe"—the other was that she did not think Carry was considering *her* comfort sufficiently; so she at once took up Nellie's side of the question.

"You forget, my dear, that I should have been alone if Nellie had gone with you," she said, in a slightly reproachful tone, "and I wish you would remember to call me 'Aunt Fanshawe.' You had better go and dress for dinner at once, all of you; it is very nearly six o'clock now. You will stay to dinner, Ronald?"

"Yes, if I have time to run home and dress first. Look, Nellie, I brought this home for you. It is the first piece of yellow holly I have seen about here; there was a bush of it growing on the Ruston road, close to the town." He threw a sprig of holly, all shining still with snow, into Nellie's lap, and hurried out of the room.

A faint pink came into the girl's face as she bent over Ronald's gift. He *had* thought of her, then, in the midst of the glamour which Carry had cast over him. Ah, me, what a trifle will change a woman's mood! There was no happier face at the dinner-table than Nellie's, and even John Rothesay, who had generally eyes for no one but Carry Willmore, noticed the change in Nellie's face from the listless, weary look she had worn of late; he noticed it, but silently, and he noticed also that the piece of holly was fastened in her dress.

Carry Willmore saw it too, and remembered Ronald's eagerly insisting upon stopping the carriage to gather that sprig of holly, and how *she* had fancied it was for her. Could it be that this insignificant girl had been in Mr. Merton's thoughts while she, Carry, condescended to be agreeable to him?

Impossible! She would not believe it; and she turned to Ronald with one of her sweetest smiles, and asked him to sing with her after dinner. Of course he was only too much delighted.

In the evening these two sang song after song, John Rothesay standing by in wrapt attention, and Nellie in her old place by the fire, watching the pair at the piano. Her face had grown grave again, in spite of all the efforts she made to be lively; she felt so completely shut out from everything. Mrs. Fanshawe was dozing on her couch, Ronald and Carry singing duets, and John listening to them. "They would not miss me," she thought, bitterly, "if I were dead. Perhaps Ronald might say, 'She was like a sister to me,' and he might be sorry for a little while; and then—then I should be forgotten. Ah, before *she* came it was not like that; he did care for me a little." And then Ronald came to her, and asked her to sing. She smiled, although the effort cost her a great deal. "It is getting late, Ronald," she said; "I would rather not sing to-night."

He stood still a moment, and then, without the remotest notion of what she was feeling, he went on: "*She* sings divinely, does she not? I never heard so beautiful a voice. I wish you could have lessons from the master who taught her, Nellie; you have a very good voice, it only wants cultivation."

Nellie's heart beat almost to suffocation. Yes, of course, Carry's voice was "divine," hers "wanted cultivation." "You are very kind," she said, in a bitter tone, "but I could never hope to aspire to Miss Willmore's perfection."

"Now I have offended you," said Ronald, in an altered tone. "Nellie, how is it that you are so altered lately?"

"I am tired of sameness," retorted Nellie, with a forced laugh, "and—and we have known each other too long, I think. New friends are often more valued than old ones."

"Nellie!" Without another word he went back to the piano.

How Nellie wished she had not said it! How she sobbed when she was safe in her own room that night from any watching eyes! Yes, she had spoken unkindly, bitterly, to this her oldest, dearest friend. What if he did love this

girl? Should not his old friend rejoice at his happiness, for it was plain that Carry liked him? What right had Nellie to expect him to love her? What were her claims beside Carry's—on the one side wealth, beauty, fascination, accomplishments—on *hers*, ah, nothing but an all-absorbing love? Yes, she loved him. Through all these years when they had grown up together, through all the monotony of her quiet life, she had never known what a passionate love for Ronald lay hidden in her heart. Jealousy had brought it to light at last to-night; for the first time she saw the truth. Ay, she loved him—not with the calm, sisterly affection she had once fondly fancied she should always feel for him, but with a love that was part of herself, and which henceforth she must try to conceal. For did not Ronald love Carry Willmore? Little doubt of it. Well, he would be happy, and he would never know that Nellie had loved him. She must not betray herself by speeches such as she had made to-night. No, she must be more friendly than ever to him, that he might not suspect anything. Ah, she should die if she thought he would ever find out that she had loved him! And then pride came to her aid. She would not sit up any longer dreaming of the past, of the old days when she and Ronald had been all in all to each other; she would go to bed at once, and sleep, and forget it all.

She did go to bed at once, and lay awake until early morning, revolving in her mind the events of yesterday.

CHAPTER II.

THREE days later Carry Willmore had gone back to London, and Mr. Rothesay also had returned to his home in the north. The house was very quiet again; everything seemed to go on as before, only in Nellie's heart there was a great change. She knew the truth now, knew that she had always loved Ronald, and that she could never be a sister to him in

heart any more. Outwardly she had changed too, and a wistful, pathetic look had stolen into the large, soft eyes. Ronald saw the outward change in her, and manlike of course, misunderstood it. After puzzling himself for some time to think what could make her so silent and abstracted at times, he came to the conclusion that she had learnt to care for John Rothesay, and that John Rothesay had eyes for no one but Carry Willmore. The idea, once in his head, grew and took shape. Poor little Nellie, how sorry he felt for her! He wondered if there was nothing he could do to comfort her. He would try to persuade her to confide in him, for his aunt was too selfish to trouble herself about anything of the kind, he knew.

The very day on which he came to this wise conclusion, Nellie had gone out for a long walk by herself. It was a clear, frosty day, and only pleasantly cold. Nellie walked briskly, and with a look of determined enjoyment of the weather and everything else on her face, and she was thinking all the while: "I know he is engaged to Carry Willmore; he will tell me so some day soon, and I shall look pleased, and say I am glad. Oh, *that* is no falsehood, I *shall* be glad of his happiness! And then I shall have to hear all his praises of her, and sympathise, and then—then my *life* will be over. What a long, dreary existence lies before me afterwards Oh, Ronald—Ronald! Will she make you happier than I should if you had cared for me? Well, she is beautiful, and I am not; but she cannot love you as I have, as I always shall."

Tears came into her eyes. Ay, it did seem hard that a pair of laughing blue eyes should outweigh the tried and true love of years. It was her first great sorrow; the world had always seemed to her to be so full of happiness, a few weeks ago even. Before Carry Willmore had come upon the scene, everything seemed so bright, and now—well, now the sunshine was gone out of her life, that was all. There were the same duties, the same pleasures, to be gone through, but the flavour was gone from them. "And oh, I hope he will be very happy!" said the poor little soul half aloud, stopping in a lonely lane to lean against a stile and rest a moment, for she had walked far and fast, "very—very happy!"

Her voice died away, and a flood of tears came to her relief.

A joyous burst of song from a robin, who was watching her with friendly eyes, made her look up. The robin, with an eye to his own interest, flew down from his perch, and alighted at her feet with a look which said very plainly, "I am hungry; the ground is frozen, and you ~~are~~ wasting your time in tears instead of feeding me." Nellie never went out in the winter-time without a plentiful supply of crumbs, and she had just scattered a handful to the bird, leaning with her back to the stile as she did so, when a hand touched her shoulder, and Ronald's voice said: "Well, I thought I should find you in your favourite lane somewhere. Aunt Fanshawe told me you were out, so I came across the fields, for I felt sure you would not forget your birds to-day. It is three days since you fed them, poor little things."

"How do you know?" said Nellie, without turning round.

"I know everything you do always, Nellie"—he sprang over the stile as he spoke—"and I have been wishing for an opportunity to say something to you." He paused.

Nellie turned hastily towards him, and he saw her pale cheeks and the traces of her recent tears. "It is coming," she thought, and she grew paler and paler at the thought.

"Nellie," he went on, "ever since—well, these last few weeks I have noticed that you were altered. You used to be as happy as the day was long, now you are pale and quiet, and often sad. You have tears in your eyes now. Are we not old friends, Nellie? Will you tell me your sorrow? If I am powerless to prevent it, I can at least help you to bear it." He took her hand. She drew it hastily away, and covered her face with her hands. He went on: "Am I presuming upon our old friendship, Nellie, that you will not answer me? Confide in me, and let me try to comfort you."

No answer, but Nellie was sobbing uncontrollably now. Ronald felt almost angry. Why was she so reserved to him? He had always been like a brother to her. He took her hand again forcibly.

"Nellie, you *shall* speak," he said, in an authoritative tone. "I *will* be obeyed."

Then Nellie *did* answer. The assumption of authority over her angered her, and her anger dried her tears.

"And what right have *you* to expect me to obey you, sir?" she said, looking full in his face, her cheeks flushed with anger, her lovely eyes glowing with indignation. "What——"

Ah, Nellie—Nellie! You began very bravely, but it was a dangerous thing for you to look into the eyes you loved so dearly, and you broke down—and alas! only loved him the more for his decided tone. But Ronald was quite determined now that Nellie should answer him. He held her hand still, and waited patiently, but with a look that said he would not be trifled with.

Nellie tried to recover her voice, and succeeding at last, she said, "It is nothing, Ronald."

"And you think I am going to believe that, Nellie? Well, if you will not tell me, I must find out for myself some time or other. Now it is too cold for you to stand here any longer; I will walk home with you. Did I tell you that Mr. Rothesay has asked me to go and stay with him?" he went on when they had set out on their homeward way.

"Has he?" in a listless tone.

"Yes. He is a very pleasant fellow; I think I shall go. I fancy he admired Miss Willmore very much, and no wonder, she is the kind of girl one does not often meet with," he paused.

A glance at Nellie showed him that she had grown pale again, and her lips were compressed, but she did not speak.

"I am right," thought Ronald to himself. "Poor little thing, if she would only confide in me, I could reason with her. After all, John Rothesay is a great idiot. Did you notice how marked his attentions were?" he went on aloud.

"No," said Nellie, who, in truth, had been too indifferent about Mr. Rothesay to notice him at all.

Ronald lost patience. He was extremely determined always, and hitherto Nellie had always yielded to his will in everything; *this* Nellie was a new one, and he did not like the change.

"What did *you* think of John Rothesay?" he said, abruptly.

"I think of *him*?" returned Nellie, in a tone of astonishment. "I—I really don't think I have ever thought of him at all. I think *Miss Willmore* everything that is perfect."

"You poor, dear little thing," cried Ronald, "is it possible you can think me so blind? Nellie, Nellie, I see it all; let me comfort you."

"What do you mean, Ronald?" Nellie answered, standing still in the middle of the road, her face like marble, and a fear she could not wholly conceal in her eyes. Was it possible that he had suspected her love for himself, and that he was so unmanly as to tell her so?

"I mean your—affection for John Rothesay——"

"My affection for Mr. Rothesay?" repeated Nellie, slowly and deliberately. "Mr. Merton, what have I done that you should insult me like this?"

"I knew you would be angry, Nellie, but it is far better for you to tell me your troubles than to brood over them as you have done lately."

"And you think that I care for Mr. Rothesay!" cried Nellie, in a fit of indignation almost too great for words. "And you dare to tell me so! Oh, Ronald, Ronald, that *you* should think such a thing. Is it likely that I should care for a man whom I have only known a few weeks, and who—who never even *saw* me, I believe." And then Nellie broke down entirely, and sobbed so bitterly that Ronald felt dreadfully ashamed of himself; he tried to beg her pardon, for now that he began to think it over, he *had* been presumptuous. But Nellie was thoroughly offended; she would go home alone, and she would not speak to him any more.

For once in his life he was forced to give way, and as the slight figure vanished out of sight as he stood watching it from a distance, he vowed that he would never interfere in anyone's love affairs again; it was impossible to understand women. Curiously enough he was conscious of a secret feeling of satisfaction that at least it was not about John Rothesay that Nellie was grieving. How he should miss her if she married! And after all, she was pretty sure to marry some day. What would Merton be without Nellie? He tried to compare Carry Willmore with her in his own mind,

but somehow Carry seemed unlovable when he looked at her by the side of the girl whom he had known—ah!—twenty summers—her whole life! He could not remember any time in his life when Nellie's smile had not welcomed him, Nellie's eyes brightened when he drew near. All his troubles, all his hopes and aims, had been confided to her, he had always been sure of her sympathy; and to-day he had made her shed tears, he had wounded the tender little soul who had been like a sister to him. A sister? Well, now he thought of it, she had been more than a sister. What sister could so have revered his opinion, so implicitly believed in him? Well, it was hopeless to try and find out from Nellie herself what it was that had so altered her; he must try some other way. He did try; he attacked Mrs. Fanshawe quite suddenly one day on the subject of Nellie's altered looks.

"She has never been the same since John Rothersey and Miss Willmore stayed here, Aunt Fanshawe," he said. "Have you noticed it?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Fanshawe, not, however, looking at her nephew as she spoke, and with a slightly contemptuous smile on her face.

"Cannot you persuade her to confide in you, aunt? I have tried, but without success."

His face flushed as he remembered the utter failure that his "speaking" had been.

"No doubt," returned Mrs. Fanshawe, oracularly. "Most men are fools. I do not see why you should be an exception."

Ronald opened his eyes in astonishment, for his aunt was not in the habit of using strong language.

"She was angry with me," he said, deprecatingly; "and really, we have always been like brother and sister. I do not know why she should have been offended."

"Of course not; men are always blind on some subjects," retorted his aunt, who appeared to have some spite against mankind in general and himself in particular this afternoon.

"Well, but surely a brother may expect his sister to tell him her troubles."

"You are *not* her brother, Ronald, which makes all the

difference. Let us change the subject. Would you like me to invite Carry here again in the early spring? Of course it is rather a fatigue for me to have her here, but to please you I do not mind."

She watched him narrowly while she spoke, her eyes half closed meanwhile, like a sleepy cat watching a mouse.

"To please *me!*" he exclaimed. "What difference could her coming make to me?"

"Then Nellie was wrong," said Mrs. Fanshawe, calmly, in a serene tone.

"What did Nellie say?"

"Well, my dear Ronald," replied Mrs. Fanshawe, "you need not fly at me; the poor child only agreed with me that you admired Carry very much, and that it would be a very suitable match."

"Nellie said that?"

"Well, why not? I'm sure your admiration was patent to everybody. Nellie is not blind; she naturally noticed it, as who would not? Besides, you know Nellie (from her sisterly relationship to you, doubtless) always finds out your likes and dislikes before any one else does."

"Well, I must go now," said Ronald, abruptly.

He turned to shake hands with his aunt, but his foot caught in Nellie's little work-table; it fell, and the lock bursting open, all her little treasures were scattered on the floor.

Mrs. Fanshawe said, "Dear, dear," quite placidly, and Ronald went down on his knees to pick up Nellie's scattered property.

Very carefully he put everything to rights, and was leaving the room, when his foot struck against a little leather box lying open at his feet. He picked it up, and was about to fasten down the lid—what was it that stopped his hand, and made him bite his lip in that fashion? Only a sprig of holly, dry and withered, a piece of paper round the stem, with the words, "From Ronald," on it. Very carefully Ronald replaced the box in the table, and without another word he left the room.

"And really the folly of some men is simply incredible,

was his aunt's inward comment. She had *not* seen the contents of the box, or she might have thought his "folly" more incredible still.

CHAPTER III.

SPRING!—what delightful visions the word brings to mind! Ronald had just returned from a long visit to Scotland, where he had been staying with John Rothesay. He was on his way now to find Nellie, and as he walked through the lanes, where the hedges smelt of hawthorn and wild roses, and a soft, tender green tint was over all the trees—where the birds filled the air with their wild delight, and the very butterflies seemed intoxicated with the honey and dew, and danced mazy reels in the air to the birds' music—he felt the influence of the beauty around him. Life was especially sweet just now, he knew not why. Perhaps because he was looking forward to seeing Nellie, and he had discovered of late that he was growing fond of her. It was very pleasant to think how the little face would brighten and the eyes light up to see him. He came upon her sooner than he expected; she had scrambled up a bank to get some flowers, and when Ronald saw her, she had her arms full of wild roses; she sprang down in a moment when she saw Ronald, but her greeting was shy and constrained, and he missed the sweet, frank cordiality which she had shown in former days.

"You do not seem glad to see me, Nellie," he said, in a hurt tone. "What has disturbed our friendship?"

A tint like that of the wild roses Nellie held overspread the girl's face.

"Yes, I am glad you have come back, Ronald," she said, shyly.

"Then be your own cordial self, Nellie. By the way, do you know that I met Miss Willmore in Scotland?"

She was staying with some people who live near the Rothesays."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. She begged to be remembered to you."

"How very kind!"

Nellie's tone was sarcastic, and she was biting her lips. Ronald looked at her.

"You are angry, Nellie," he said.

"I? Why should I be angry?"

"Why, indeed? Nellie"—he was standing close beside her now—"Nellie, do you know that I feel very lonely at Merton Hall. I want some one to come and brighten it. Nellie, will you come and be the sunshine of my home, my own dear little wife?"

He put his arm round her, and took her hand; she drew herself away hastily.

"Never," she said, indignantly; "you have made a mistake, Ronald. It is Carry Willmore whom you love. If she were here, you would not condescend to notice me. I do not forget so soon as you do!" and breaking away from him, she ran away up the lane, leaving him in utter astonishment, with the roses scattered at his feet.

Since the day when Ronald had found the piece of holly, and discovered poor little Nellie's cherished secret, he had fancied that he had only to ask her and she would be only too happy to become his wife. He had forgotten that love sharpens the sight, and that Nellie, however much she might care for him would expect a somewhat less "taking it for granted" affection than was implied in this abrupt wooing. He had mentioned Carry Willmore, too, and the name always seemed to vex Nellie. What could he do now? This unexpected opposition had roused him, and he began to feel that if Nellie could not be convinced of his love, it would be a more serious thing to him than he had thought.

And Nellie? "How dare he ask me to marry him?" she thought. "Just because he fancies I care for him, and all the time he is thinking, and even talking, of Carry Willmore, and he sees I care for him, and he is doing this out of pity, and—and—I really think I *hate* him for it." And then she burst into tears, and cried all the way home, so that

Mrs. Fanshawe exclaimed when she entered the drawing-room—

"Well, your walk has done you no good, Nellie; you look dreadful. Where are the wild roses you were to bring me, and did you meet Ronald?"

"I—forgot—the roses, I am very sorry," stammered poor Nellie. "Yes, I met Ronald."

Mrs. Fanshawe sat up to look at her stepdaughter for a moment, and then sank back, murmuring, languidly—

"A couple of geese! Dear me, how badly men always manage things!"

A month of estrangement and discomfort followed on Ronald's declaration. Nellie's pride was thoroughly roused. She avoided him as much as possible; and although, poor little thing, she loved him more than ever, she was to all appearance perfectly indifferent to him. Ronald had learnt a lesson. Nellie's anger and indignation at his abrupt declaration had shown him that however much a woman may love, she cannot brook a condescending recognition of it from the man she cares for. Better indifference, even hatred—better anything than that tone of security when her love is still outwardly unwon.

The woods are cool and shady now, and Nellie spends a great part of her time there with books and work—when, that is to say, Mrs. Fanshawe is *well* enough to spare her.

She is in the wood on a broiling June day—broiling, that is, everywhere else—here, in the shade of these old trees, it is simply perfect. Nellie thinks so. She leans back against an old mossy stump luxuriously. She has taken off her hat long ago. She sighs a sigh of pure enjoyment of the air and the beauty around her. Then she begins to think, and another sigh, a very different one, escapes her. How happy she used to be! Why has she learnt to love Ronald? How much better to be peacefully and happily fond of him, as she was years ago! Then her memory takes her back to her childhood. How kind he always was to her. She remembers it with something of remorse. She was *very* unreasonably angry after all. Perhaps he really did love her. But then he did certainly admire Carry Willmore; and Nellie thinks, with

another sigh : "No, he only asked me because he thought I cared for him. He does not really love me, and I will be content with no condescending brotherly affection."

Her face is very sober now. She is absently unrolling a little frond of fern which grows near her hand. She does not see some one standing close behind her, hears nothing, till Ronald comes forward and throws himself at her feet. She starts violently then, and would get up ; but he detains her gently, but with a strength that she cannot resist. She tries to be angry, but she cannot, and instead she bursts into tears.

"Nellie"—Ronald's voice is very low, and somehow Nellie fancies there is a quiver in it—"will you forgive me for my assurance some time ago ? I am going to confess my fault, dear. I *did* fancy you cared for me, and I thought, presumptuous wretch that I was, that I had only to own my affection for you and you would be mine. You taught me a lesson, Nellie. Your refusal has shown me my true feelings. I love you, darling, past all words, past all expression. These weeks have been a dreary blank to me without your dear smile to lighten them. Have I offended you past redemption, Nellie ? Can you never forgive that rash assumption, that cool attempt to win without wooing, or must I go away ? I cannot live in Merton without you. If you do not love me, I must go far away, and never see you again. One little word, Nellie, am I to go ?"

He has held her hand all the time, and the small fingers close trustfully over his, and Nellie's eyes look up in his face ; but she never answers him, and yet he is content ; and the wood seems all glorified and beautiful, and all Nellie's fears and sorrows are gone. Her last lingering doubt fled before the look in Ronald's eyes, and life seems almost too glad to be real.

* * * * *

"And there are some wedding-cards I have just received, child," says her stepmother, when the pair at length remember that there are other people in the world than themselves. "Why, Nellie, you look like a rose. What, Ronald ? You want to take her away from me ? Well, of course I must say, 'Yes ;' but I must just add that although I always thought men a poor set of creatures, I do think you have been all

along one of the blindest, with regard to your own feelings and to Nellie's, that I ever saw. Now that I have relieved my mind, you can come and kiss me, Nellie dear ; but I shall always think you were a couple of geese for not sooner finding out that you cared for each other. There, you've dropped the cards, child. Have you read them? Look— 'John Rothesay, Mrs. J. Rothesay, *née* Caroline Willmore.' ”

ALICE EVEZARD.

FORGOTTEN.

WITH folded arms and thoughtful brow
She gazes on that letter now,
The characters his hand had traced,
The words that time had not effaced.
They still are here, but where is he
Who wrote them with his witchery?
Who spoke of deep and bitter grief,
Of sorrow that has no relief,
Of days and hours long since gone,
Of young hopes blighted ere begun,
Of altered words and looks estranged,
Of lines once kind to coldness changed,
Of present pain and pleasures past,
Forgotten since, or scorn'd at last?
By her they are remembered well,
Whose eyes, though tearless, sadly dwell
On these his words of nothingness,
Mourn'd o'er, yet not loved less.

L. A. MAUDSLEY,



EMILIA ———.

(IN MEMORIAM.)

AND is there none to shed a tear,
To mourn a "vanished hand"?
A passing guest—to someone dear—
Dead in a foreign land!

No eye to moisten at the tale
So sad, so briefly told?
No friend or kindred to bewail
The loss of—more than gold?

Strangers around, and friends away,
And *she* among the dead;
Hid out of sight like common clay,
An alien soil her bed!

A sad, sad story it may be,
'Tis one of many more;
No ill henceforth be said of her—
She's dead—and all is o'er.

Sic transit! so the shadows pass
Across Time's waste of sand;
But she is dead, alas! alas!
Dead in a foreign land!

J. C. H.



FRENCH DOUBLE ACROSTIC,

No. 3.

BIEN des gens, chaque jour, font un vilain métier,
Faute de distinguer le second du premier.

I.

Tout homme d'esprit veut en faire ;
Les meilleurs sont ceux de Voltaire.

II.

Ce mot, lecteur, est simplement
Où je suis en ce moment.

III.

Un très puissant auxiliaire ;
Voir, pour le trouver, la grammaire.

IV.

Celui qui veut emprunter de l'argent
Pour sa réponse entend ce mot souvent.

R. E.

SOLUTION OF DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 2.

N aggin G
O tt O

Proem :—Tilbury Fort—Tilbury Nogo.

Light II. Otto von Godesberg: see "Legend of the Rhine
by Thackeray.

Correct answers received from :—Brevette—What, Never?
—La Belle Alliance—Shark—S. P. E.—Charmione—P. V.—
Quite a Young Thing too—Dowager—Miserere—Artemisia
—Nursery—Black Beetle—and Beolne; 14 correct and 73
incorrect—total, 87.

FRENCH MESOSTICH, No. 3.

Victor Hugo crie à la ronde
Que je suis le flambeau du monde.

I.

Célèbre pour sa marmite.

II.

Petit rongeur qui court fort vite.

III.

Un beau désordre en est l'effet souvent.

IV.

Chez Monsieur Faye en poudre ça se vend.

V.

Si vous trouvez mes vers bêtes,
Voici l'oiseau que vous êtes.

I. P.

SOLUTION OF MESOSTICH NO. 2.

al	P	en
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Correct answers received from :—Coup d'Essai—Numantia—Shark—Black Beetle—Bear—Nursery—Beolne—Miserere—Artemisia—Dowager—Karry Hook—P. V.—S. P. E.—Charmione—Quite a Young Thing too—What, Never?—La Belle Alliance—Brevette—Hanky-Panky—and Cetywayo ; 20 correct and 39 incorrect—total, 69.

Coup d'Essai.—Partial solutions cannot be credited.

Dowager, Miserere, and others.—Your arguments are ingenious ; but I must uphold "Shame" as the better answer.

ACROSTIC AND MESOSTICH RULES.

I.—Each number of the *St. James's Magazine* will contain a Double Acrostic and a Mesostich.

II.—In *each* competition Three Annual Prizes, in money (1st prize twenty-five guineas, 2nd prize ten guineas, 3rd prize five guineas), will be awarded to the three most successful solvers.

III.—Special competitions will be held for guessing off ties (if any).

IV.—Prize-winners will be required to furnish their names and addresses for publication.

V.—The same solver may win prizes in both competitions.

VI.—Only *one* word can be accepted as the solution of each light.

VII.—Answers addressed to "The Acrostic Editor," 5, Friar Street, Ludgate Hill, E.C., must be posted in time to be received by the first post on the 10th of each month, or on the 11th, if the 10th falls on a Sunday.

VIII.—In accordance with the wishes of numerous Subscribers, the Acrostics and Mesostiches for March, June, September and December will be in French.

St. James's Magazine.

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APRIL, 1879.  
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HUBERT MAITLAND'S WRAITH.

A NOVEL.

By FELIX HOLLAND.

THEN gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman ;
Though they may gang a kennin' wrang,
To step aside is human :
One point must still be greatly dark,
The knowing why they do it :
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it.



PROLOGUE.



DARK and stormy night.

A bleak, black ridge rising steeply up from a winding river, overshadowing the valley, and stretching far away into the darkness. Little clusters of cottages dotted in among the trees at its foot ; half way up its side an ancient, ivy-covered church, surrounded by its white attendant grave-stones, nestling in a dark green hollow, rendering more constant praise to God by its beauty than its worshippers with their lips. A little beyond, a great old-fashioned farmhouse and farmstead, standing out in proud pre-eminence against the dimly discerned horizon ; firelight flickering in one high gable window, giving just sufficient light to show the swaying vine-branches on the blind ; all the rest in gloom. Further along the hillside and nearer the river, a wayside inn gleaming welcome through all its latticed panes, gleaming and flashing through the darkness, up the dreary hill, over the

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troubled river, into the murky sky where the clouds roll and toss like a huge reflection of the seething waves below.

A solitary traveller is toiling over the dark hill towards the churchyard in the glen. Piteous and terrible is the sight of that old man wandering there alone in the darkness and storm. The cottagers who dwell below have strange tales to tell of that mysterious traveller. And never a man will venture up that churchyard path at midnight, for they say he is no mortal, but Hubert Maitland's wraith. A benighted peasant once met him there on such a night as this, saw him by the lightning-light as he silently passed and left no foot-print on the ground. The poor fellow is at rest now under the green turf where falls the shadow of the churchyard sycamore, for no man crosses the path of Hubert Maitland's wraith and lives.

At this moment the little herd of belated cottagers are talking about it in yonder cheerful little inn—whispering the story with pallid lips which fail them at every peal of thunder, and at every flash of lightning some braggart rustic buries his face and his fears in an ale-pot, and wishes in his heart he were safe at home.

Louder booms the thunder, more fierce and incessant gleams the lightning, the whole heaven is flooded with the liquid fire. The faces of the stoutest revellers grow white with terror, and their strong hands tremble as they point aghast through the rattling window. Not a word is spoken, not a foot stirs on the sanded floor; silence and horror only, for it is Hubert Maitland's wraith.

As they gaze, a great cloud of lurid smoke rises slowly into the night, followed by vivid streaks of fire, as though the lightning was leaping from the earth to meet the falling lightning of the sky. A minute the crowd stand dumb, then a great cry bursts simultaneously from every lip.

"Fire! fire! the hillside farm is on fire!" Hubert Maitland's wraith has been seen on the hill, and danger and death are abroad!

Out into the tempest and the night huddle the excited throng—to the fire engine in the village, to the church to ring the alarm bell, to the burning house on the hill. Poor, ignorant, superstitious rustics! But they are men—Englishmen; helpless women and children may stand in need of their stout hearts

and arms, and not Hubert Maitland's wraith had stopped them now. Like bees they swarm round the burning house; they run for water, for ropes and ladders; they dash in windows and doors; they leap from room to room along the stifling corridors, fighting their way through flame and smoke liker demons than men. Philip Clark, the owner of the farm, is from home; the servants are safe, huddled together in a neighbouring hovel; but the children, Philip's poor little orphaned boy and girl, whose mother only died a year ago, where are they? In vain the excited people call their names, shouting and screaming louder than the roaring flames, the children cannot be found. The fire is gaining fast. Soon it drives the stoutest helper back into the open air. The thatch has caught, and the sparks are falling on their heads like that fiery snow which Dante saw rained on the damned. The poor baffled people stand helplessly gazing. Perhaps they offer up a faithless prayer or two as they think of their own darlings sleeping peacefully in their homes. All has been done that can be done, and all has failed.

Then, when every hope is lost, a child's cry is heard, and lo! at the open window in the gable, beyond the reach of the tallest ladder, the faces of the children are dimly discerned peering through the smoke. No help can reach them there. The flames are pouring from the great window below, the corn-ricks have caught, and the suffocating smoke, blown down by the wind, drives the motley crowd every minute further from the house. Soon the crash of falling timbers, and the hissing and roaring of the flames drown the children's cries. The men shout, the women scream and swoon; and amidst it all Philip Clark comes galloping up the hill, just in time to hear the last wail of the children as the fire-cloud closes over them. The farmer gave a loud cry, and leapt from his horse. In an instant he would have been within the flaming building, but a dozen stout labourers held him back, he could but have added his own life to the holocaust.

"Harkee, Master," said one in his ear, as he struggled frantically to shake himself free of their hands, "It is useless I tell you; the staircase is one mass of fire, and God help us, Hubert Maitland's wraith is abroad!"

Hardly were the words spoken when the crowd became

conscious of something moving on the roof. Steadily it walks the burning rafters—tall and black, its face hidden in a cloak, and a great hat slouched over its eyes, its long white hair clinging in snaky tresses to its broad shoulders; the flames play under it, and round it, and over it, and the sparks leap up in showers as it passes; on it goes—there, where no man could live a moment, neither staggering nor halting till it reaches the angle of the gable-roof under which the children lie. There it is hidden a moment by the smoke, and the people breathe again. But, no, it is not gone. As the smoke clears a little it is once more visible, moving stealthily down the wall, holding on by the nails and charred branches of the vine. The window is reached at last, and the apparition disappears.

In speechless awe the crowd stand, trembling. Again the grim shadow darkens the window, then there is a scream, and the boy is seen falling through the smoke. A score of strong men sprung forward, two score strong arms are upraised to save him. He is down! he is killed! no! he is saved, and the women carry him to his father's arms, while the men wait at their post, shouting to the little sister who is still there, so far from help, perishing in the chamber through which Hubert Maitland's wraith had passed.

Higher rise the flames, gaining every moment on that little angle which had so long withstood them. The roof falls in at last, the walls crack and fall, and the smoke clouds grow thin and drift away. And when in the morning the sun rose smiling in a placid sky, as if there had been no storm for a hundred years, there, where for generations his beams had been welcomed by the flowers and vines of the Hillside farm, stood a black and reeking ruin.

“And the farmer will never see his little black-eyed girl again.”

“And God grant we may never see Hubert Maitland's wraith again, nor another such a night as this.”

Day had dawned an hour ere full consciousness returned to Philip Clark's beclouded brains. He sat apart on the gnarled root of an old walnut tree in the orchard, whither he had fled in his first terror and despair. There the people left him alone with sorrow. He was a man they loved and pitied, yet some-

how they shrank from him as though the brand of Cain was on his brow.

Truly the hand of Fate seemed to have marked this man for misery. Here, fifteen years ago, he had met and loved with all the ardour of his young passionate heart his bonnie Bessie, the beautiful heiress of this doomed house and the surrounding lands. Her father and she lived here; her mother, a gifted Italian singer, who in giving her hand to the man she loved and deprived him of a fortune, yet made him happy, had lived and died here. Here he had loved her, his chosen one, in hope and courage, till this man Hubert Maitland crossed his path and stole the girl's heart. Here he had lingered, bearing five long years the agony of suspense, while this hated rival was away in a foreign land coining gold with his Midas fingers; gold wherewith to return and claim his bride. Hither the news was brought of Hubert Maitland's shipwreck and death—news which filled his heart with hope; but, alas! broke Bessie's with despair. Here he had wooed her in sorrow; in sorrow he had led her a blighted bride to the altar. In yonder old church the first returning light of health and hope shone in her eye as he placed the ring upon her finger. Here she had leant a minute on his arm, and looked up smiling in his face. Then this man, saved by fate from the storm where all his comrades perished, again confronted them; pierced that tender heart again by his unjust, upbraiding looks, then drowned himself in yonder river, leaving behind him a legacy of woe and death. Here the poor wife had pined for weary, uncomplaining years and died. And now the old home made sacred by her memory was gone, and the darling girl who had filled her mother's place in his heart lay buried in its ruins. Why had Heaven marked him thus for misery and brought this dark shadow back from the grave, ever the harbinger of its fiat?"

Hour after hour the stricken man sat with his boy—now his only child—upon his knees, and his face buried in his hands. Now and then he would lift his head and stare vacantly at the smouldering ruins, then as quickly hide his face again. At length he rose, and clasping the child closer to his breast he walked wildly away.

No man or woman who saw him will ever forget it. Those few hours had done the work of years; his stalwart frame was

shrunken and bowed ; his face once handsome and proud, was so haggard that the people who stepped aside as he passed whispered one another that it was just so Hubert Maitland had looked when he rushed down to the river to die.

He reached the churchyard and placed the boy tenderly on the ground, while, with bowed head and clasped hands, he knelt over a grey granite slab that lay half hidden in the grass. Soon he rose, kissed the boy, and folded him lovingly in his arms. One lingering look he cast over the valley, at the bright winding river, the cottages dotting its green wooded banks—at the black ruin which but yesterday had been his home, and now was only the horrible tomb of his child ; then he turned away over the hill, and the people saw him no more.

Many years have flown, but to this day Philip Clarke and his boy have not returned. The ruin of the old farmstead still frowns over the valley ; the cottagers and farmers meet as ever at the wayside inn. The old church stands beautiful as ever in its ivy mantle, only two or three white stones and six or seven new green mounds have risen around it. There are so many the less men and women in Otley who remember the terrible night which saw the last of Hubert Maitland's wraith.

CHAPTER I.

THE "CROWN AND CANDLE," BY E. SCROGGS.

IN the suburban locality of Kensington Gore there formerly stood, or rather leaned on its neighbour's arm, an ancient public-house, the "Crown and Candle," by Ebenezer Scroggs. One might have thought to look at it, that never a customer entered its rickety door, and in despair the old building had taken to bad habits, consuming its own liquors in a state of

chronic intoxication. In fact, it was one of those public-houses which, like certain individuals, contrive to rub along from year to year in a becoming and respectable manner without any visible means of subsistence. No mortal would have thought of stepping out of his way to drink a pint of ale at its dusty counter, or a glass of grog in its dull dark parlour; yet the brewer's dray came and went, and the drunken casks tumbled continually about the narrow pavement. Where did all the liquor go? Was there within some Titanic landlord with distended paunch, long grown too vast to admit of abstraction through the narrow portal, who, like a veritable Old King Cole, with a pewter pot for his crown, and a clay pipe for his sceptre, sat the livelong day pouring the mellow ale down his gurgling throat? Or was there a secret passage to the monastery hard by? But no, it is no mere relic of a bygone faith, this old moss-grown shrine of Bacchus. There are customers—you may see them when the semi-luminous lamps are lighted—the substantial householders and shopkeepers of the neighbourhood, stealing like so many portly ghosts along the silent street—gliding out from side-doors of many a quaint old shop and house, creeping away in the shadow of overhanging eaves, as if afraid their wives should see them, and vanishing in the "Crown and Candle." Then if you listened at the barred and shuttered window you might hear a noise as of giants laughing, and the ring of glasses, and the clinking of metal pots, and the rattle of heavy fists brought down like hammers on the oaken table, and the stamping of still heavier feet upon the oaken floor; and ever and anon, between the tempests of mirth, would be heard the soft tones of the mellowest of fiddles, and a sweet tenor voice singing some good old song to its accompaniment.

But there was neither laughter nor song to-night. The guests were there, the table was strewn with exhilarating glasses and pots, but every man sat over his long pipe in silence—in silence, as if so many spectres drinking from so many ethereal vessels, they raised the foaming ale to their lips and sat down the empty tankard on the table. The fire was nearly out, and the gorbellied kettle, that might have stood godfather to "Puffing Billie" and his progeny, sat silent on the dying embers; the cat sat still and silent on the

hearth, the landlord sat silent in his capacious arm-chair, the fiddle hung silent on the wall, for Tom the minstrel was dead.

Poor Tom! so often and so long had his merry voice resounded through the glad old house that he had become a part of it, and now that his voice was no longer heard, it seemed the "Crown and Candle Inn" no more. Many a time had he set the grave citizens dancing to his magic music, laughing at his inexhaustible store of jests, and applauding his ever welcome songs—and Tom was dead!

Oh a rare racketsy chap was the minstrel of the "Crown and Candle," he could empty a bottle, quaff a brimming tankard, and crack a skull or a joke with any man in merry England. Never a braver heart, a thirstier throat, nor a more tuneful voice; never a heartier laugh, nor a more aching head; never so cheerful, good-natured a soul in such a shattered, crazy body—and Tom was dead!

There was a sharp rap on the oaken counter, and the landlord started at the unwonted sound. Again it was repeated, and with a loud grunt and a deep "Dom me!" Ebenezer Scroogs groped his way to the bar. For a minute he smoked his pipe in awful silence before the unwelcome phenomenon of an unacquainted customer. At last he sufficiently recovered of his astonishment to ask in an unmitigated north-country brogue—

"Whaat dost waant?"

"Rest," said the stranger, in a musical but weary voice.

He was a tall, well-built youth of about twenty, and despite his weariness, there was a bright, self-reliant look on his sunburnt face that seemed rather to command than solicit assistance.

"Ahem! so thee taakes this for a lodging house, eh, yoong mon?" drawled Ebenezer Scroogs, actually removing his pipe from his mouth in his indignation. As the smoke rose, the landlord saw that the young man was fainting. In another second he would have fallen had not Ebenezer caught him on his portly chest and carried him bodily into the parlour, where he propped him up in his own comfortable chair, and proceeded to choke him with hot brandy and water. By the time the landlord had poured the contents of his glass into the stomach and shirt-bosom of the comatose stranger, some of the old fellows began to comprehend the

situation. A baker, whose calling perhaps had made him conversant with that indescribable something which indicates an empty stomach, asked bluntly if the lad was hungry?

"Thank you, I am very hungry," answered the stranger, with a pretty Italian accent.

"Dom me, if the lod beant a furriner!" cried Mr. Scroggs. "Pray the Lord he beant a Frenchman, for I could not, on my conscience, give good brandy to an enemy of my coontry with so many honest fellows thorsty at whoam." Then turning to one of his companions, "Bring in a bit of beef, and a crust, Dick, sharp. There," continued Ebenezer, placing the viands before his uninvited guest, "eaat, laddie, only if thee beest a Frenchman doant saa so."

The suspected enemy ate a morsel ravenously, then suddenly put the plate aside.

"I have no money," he said.

"Dom thy money; eaat laddie, only if thee beest a Frenchman' doant saa so," thundered the landlord.

"I am not," replied the young man, resuming his supper; "I am English born, and can sing you an English song in payment of your kindness, or," he added with a glance at poor Tom Turner's fiddle, "I can play you a dance on your violin, if it's in tune."

"Dom it! can thee though?" cried the landlord, tenderly taking down the instrument from the wall: "Look thee, yongsther, if thee canst only pipe a bit, and scrape this sweet squealing thing summoot like the poor fellow who killed unself by it—died o' shatteration o' the nerves in fact—if thee canst do it half so well as he, dom it but thee'st welcome at the 'Crown and Candle,' for the remainder of ta mortal loife."

The young man's eyes brightened as he seized the instrument; to rosin the bow and tighten the pegs was the work of a minute; then, with a proud smile as of one who knew his art and loved it, he ran his long delicate fingers over the vibrating bridge. Two or three strokes were enough. The dazzling rapidity, the soft shower of melody completely bewildered the old publican and his friends.

"Stop, stop," cried Ebenezer, "no more of that dancing lightning, laddie, 'tis not made for the likes o' us: gi' us an honest hornpipe, or a song."

The musician struck a high key-note, and sang the "Death of Nelson;" it was poor Tom Turner's favourite song; never had these simple old fellows heard such music as that! Now there seemed a voice in the old fiddle that blended its notes with the singer's; then it was a whole host of spirits laughing on the water; again it was the echo of distant cannon, and the groans of dying men; finally, it was a chorus of girls weeping over a gallant hero's death, which merged and was lost in a grand pæan of triumph and joy. And all the while the magic voice riding the buoyant waves of harmony, rose clear and bright above it all.

I know not if it was the memory of poor Tom Turner, or the simple pathos of the song, but the four-and-twenty old fellows bowed their grey heads as reverent as a congregation in a village church, and more than one rough face was hidden in equally rough hands to conceal its tears.

"Miraculous, dom me!" was all Mr. Scroggs could say, as he handed a foaming tankard to the musician. He could not drink, the fatigue and excitement had been too great.

"Get thee to bed, laddie," said Ebenezer, kindly; "there is a little room ta gurl will show thee, where a good fellow once slept, and if 'a could see thee, 'a would be proud o' the sight; go wi' un, laddie, and God bless thee."

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Scroggs.

"Ay, ay, neighbour," answered such of the oldfellows as were not asleep.

"Ahem! gentlemen, let us gi' thanks."

The four-and-twenty honest shopkeepers were all awake and on their feet in an instant. Lifting their respective glasses and tankards to their rubicund faces, as if drinking a toast, they emptied them with a simultaneous gulp, and staggered out into the moonlight, and Ebenezer Scroggs barred the rickety door behind them.

CHAPTER II.

A WALK IN KENSINGTON GARDENS, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

AS soon as the first rays of light stole through the window, the new-found musician of the "Crown and Candle" sprang from his bed, and encountered Ebenezer Scroggs at his chamber door.

"Whaat, laddie, thee art oop betimes, laddie! Dom it, I like an early riser. Whoy, when I was a bearn on fivepence the daa, scearing the crows, ould maisther Flailham used to saa, 'Bravo, Ebbe, thee art oop afore the boords, and a'll see thee a mon afore thee doy.' And now here I be—landlord o' the 'Crown and Candle;' and maark this, laddie, when Ebenezer Scroggs goes oonder the toorf 'a will leave more behind to feed the poor than 'a'll taake wi' un to feed the woorums. Dom me! that's the philosophy o' life, laddie—alleys thry to leave more behind thee than thee takest wi' thee, and they'll foind thee a nook in heaven as snoog as a bar parlour on a winter's night. Noo dip ta head in a pail, and maaake haste aboot it, or the sun will be laughing at us."

A very few minutes sufficed for the young man's simple toilet. When he joined Mr. Scroggs in the street, he looked as fresh and bright as a newly-opened flower.

It was a very beautiful face, or would have been so had its features belonged to a woman, but its expression was, though rather too delicate and sensitive, a man's. The delicate bloom of his cheeks, the rich redness of his lips, the white brow, rendered whiter by contrast with the brown eyebrows, and dark, flashing eyes, the masses of luxuriant brown, curly hair, would all have well become a woman. But his person and carriage were thoroughly masculine, and his soft, musical voice had not in all its compass one effeminate tone. Delicately nurtured, thoughtless, imaginative, inexperienced in the ways of the world, yet bold and almost self-assurant withal, he seemed to have in him the potentiality of a fuller manhood, which only needed the rude hand of adversity to develop it.

The honest old publican noted some of these things as the young man stood at his side in the morning sunshine, and gave a grunt of admiration in acknowledgment.

"Whoy, thee looks quoit a handsom chap this morning, lad, the night's rest ha' done thee a power o' good."

"Yes, I was very tired last night, sir," returned his companion, "I had come over from Rotterdam in the night-boat, and the smell of the cattle made me ill. Then I had wandered all day through those interminable streets of London, hoping to come to green fields and cottages, where I am always certain to be happy. I was almost beginning to think you English had no fields and cottages—only houses and shops—when I became so faint I could go no further, and I truly believe but for your kindness I should have known my country only long enough to claim a grave in her."

For two hours they walked and chatted under the pleasant trees of Kensington Gardens, and when a distant clock chimed eight Mr. Scroggs proposed to rest, in order to lay in a sufficient supply of breath to carry him home. An old rotten seat surrounding an old rotten elm was at hand, and on this the pair sat down, Ebenezer silently mopping his head with a wonderful red and yellow handkerchief, while his youthful companion directed his attention to a group of sickly children who were listlessly watching a lively French lady make frantic and ostentatious efforts to bury a poodle prematurely under a heap of leaves.

While resting thus, they were startled by a sweet girl's voice reading or repeating aloud,

"O, Beatrice dolce guida e cara
Ella mi disse : Quel che ti sobranza
E virtù' da cui nulla se ripara
Quivi è la sapienza e la possanza
Ch' aprì le strade tra 'l Cielo e la Terra
Onde fu già sì lunga distanza—

"'Ch' aprì le strade tra 'l Cielo e la Terra Onde fu già sì lunga distanza,'" repeated the sweet voice—"now I wonder what that means? Oh dear, I shall never, never learn it!"

A flash of pleasure overspread the brown face of the young man, as he peered timidly round the gnarled old trunk to get

a glimpse of the lady who so melodiously lisped the language of his foster country.

Not so Ebenezer. He rose resolutely, and burying his great banner of a handkerchief in his hat, and holding them at arms length before him like a raw joint in a caldron, he walked manfully round the obstructing trunk. A beautiful girl rose gracefully as he approached, and blushed like a rose in the sun. But a man of honest intentions is not easily disconcerted. Ebenezer had taken the trouble to rise in order to see the fair reader, and he intended to see enough to recompense him for the exertion. So he stood with open eyes and mouth complacently regarding the young beauty, who, not being able to make up her mind if Mr. Scrogg's intentions were admiratory, predatory, or mendicant, grew frightened and was rushing away leaving her book on the seat, when the young man politely stopped her.

"Mi pardini. La Signorina ha obleo il suo libro." (Pardon me, miss, you have forgotten your book.)

"Grazie, Signor," replied the girl, with a smile, which made her beauty still more bewitching.

"La Signorina will pardon my offence," said the young man in the same language. "I was sitting behind the tree and unwittingly overheard her difficulty. Will La Signorina permit me to explain the perplexing passage?"

"Il Signor é Italiano?" asked the young lady, timidly.

"No, but I have passed nearly all my life in Italy, and love Dante *ardentemente*."

"Well, I don't," said the girl, with a little pout to match the blush. "He was a cruel, spiteful man, but I would try to forgive him if they did not make me learn out of his book. But," she added apologetically, "I love Italian, especially when it is easy, like Silvio Pellico and Goldini."

"I hope you will soon find Dante as easy, then you will find him much more interesting. May I explain the passage you were reading?"

"Oh, no, thank you!" said the girl, blushing deeper than ever as she turned to the group of children and their attendant, "that is my governess there with the children, she would not permit it. Buond giorno Signor," and the little lady flitted off like some beautiful creation of a dream.

"'Pon my soul, young man," ejaculated the landlord, as he wiped his brows, "thee beest a miracle. Dom me, now I should not be suprised to find thee a great man some day, and thy feyther will come and carry thee away and thee'l marry yon fairy, and ould Ebbe Scroggs will not so much as be asked to stand godfeyther to the bearns. Ahem! laddie, doant stond staring loike thot, or the breakfast will be spoiled. Dom me, to hear un talk that outlandish lingo loike saacred gospel! Afther that I shouldn't be surprised if the blessed angels in heaven were to forget the decent English thot they were brought up to and learn to speak a foreign tongue. Dom me, 'tis a strange world this." Thus admonishing and soliloquising spoke Ebenezer, pressing his homeward journey, but his companion bent his beautiful young face musingly on the ground and heeded not one word he uttered.

CHAPTER III.

MR. SCROGGS' PROTEGE IS CONFIDENT OF HIS ABILITY AND INTEGRITY; SOME OTHER PEOPLE ARE NOT.

Now it happened there was a vacancy in the counting-house of the great merchant firm of Curtice, Aldair, and Co., and the following advertisement had been inserted in the papers with a view of supplying the bereaved stool with its wonted ornament:—

"Wanted immediately, in a merchant's office, a young man as corresponding clerk in Italian and English. Salary £40 per annum to commence. Apply Curtice, Aldair, and Co., Bellhaven Street, E.C."

For three days the advertisement had appeared and still the stool remained untenanted. There had been scores of applicants, for there were numberless well-educated youths who would have thought it an honour to serve Curtice, Aldair, and Co. for nothing, but no successful ones. It was ten

o'clock, and Aldair was pulling off his gloves preparatory to commencing his daily duties.

"If you please, sir," said the chief clerk, "here is another applicant for Gibb's place, and I cannot quite make him out."

"If you cannot *make him out*, Cox," replied Mr. Aldair, administering a severe rebuke for the unbusiness-like phrase, "he will not do. We have no questionable characters I believe."

"But, sir," resumed the confidential, taking a great liberty, "his character is not questionable, seeing he hasn't any. Of course I would not trouble you under the circumstances, but he seems very clever and writes beautifully, and we *must* have somebody to-morrow at latest to write Piccorino's."

"Send him to me," commanded the great man.

The applicant was Ebenezer Scroggs' protégé.

The young man cast one keen glance at the great man's cold face, and from that moment he hated him.

"What is your name?" asked the merchant, bluntly.

"I am called Phillip Celini."

"You have no character—how did you lose it?"

"I never had one."

"Then how dare you apply here?"

"I applied because I am confident of my ability and integrity," replied Phillip, coolly.

"Mr. Cox tells me you write well; can you speak Italian fluently?"

"*Fate la prova.*"

Now that was just one thing the great Aldair could not do. But he was a hard man to beat. He looked the would-be foreign correspondent up and down, then turned away saying, "Call at Curtice House, Kensington, to-night at eight; Mdlle. Barb shall test your knowledge. In the meantime you can go to work on trial."

Phillip Celini wrote hard all day, and when evening came he was very glad to quit the polished stool and the uninteresting heap of papers for the pleasant walk to Kensington. He had borrowed a shilling of a youthful fellow-clerk, the junior French correspondent, to buy his dinner withal, and this kindly transaction had made them mutual friends.

"How do you like your berth?" asked Phillip's good-natured companion.

"Not at all," was the quick reply; "I have to call on Mr. Aldair at his house to-night to be examined by his governess.—a most pleasing arrangement, or I would not go."

"Not go!" gasped the creditor of a shilling. "Why, any of us would think it a great honour. You had better make haste, he'll sack you if you are half a minute late."

"I don't know the meaning of the verb to sack," replied Phillip. "I presume it is formed from a substantive of which Falstaff was so fond, in which case I shall not have the slightest objection to be moderately sacked. Nevertheless I will go and see *la governatrice*; she may be pretty and then I may make love to her, *amico mio*. I wish I had a better hat," he added, as he ruefully adjusted his battered wideawake.

"I would lend you one of mine, but Aldair would know it; he has a hawk's eye," said his companion.

"Grazie, but I would not wear it, *caro amico*. No matter, I will get into a dark corner where *la bell governatrice* cannot behold the imperfections of my wardrobe, and then I will make love to her in her native language under His Ignorancy's nose. *Addio amico mio*."

"*Vive l'amour!*" cried his laughing companion.

"*A bas le veau d'or,*" returned Phillip. And so they parted.

CHAPTER IV.

LE VEAU D'OR.

CURTICE, ALDAIR, AND CO. were silk merchants, and merchants in almost every textile commodity, of Bellhaven Street, E.C.. Curtice (W. E. Curtice, Esq.) had been a merchant prince fifty years ago, before the present head of the firm was born. He

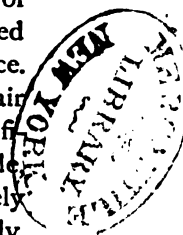
was a shrewd man, and when a less fortunate neighbour, Charles Aldair (training as Aldair & Co.), suspended payment and retired from the anxieties of business to pass the rest of his life in the country on the remnant of his fortune (about £50,000) saved from the rapacity of his creditors, he, Curtice, proposed to take the connection and Aldair's son as junior working partner, providing such a sum as £10,000 could be deposited in his behalf.

Aldair junior proved himself an assiduous, clever man, and at the death of Curtice he had played his cards so well that he became senior partner of the firm, with an income of £9,000 a year.

There were few men in the City with a better reputation for business capacity and integrity. To the youthful novitiate of the religion of commerce this pontiff of Plutus was pointed out as the bright particular star worthy of all men's reverence. Senior clerks, when they grew greyish, used to wear their hair long, and curl it well round their ears, *à la Aldair*. Insignificant beginners in business affected his commanding attitude, and paced their cockloft warehouses with his measured, stately stride. Every *employé* in his house rendered him, unconsciously, the sincere worship of imitation, and every envious brother merchant could find it in his heart to flatter the great incarnation of his deity—success.

But it was at Curtice-house, that magnificent mansion at Kensington, built by the founder of the firm in anticipation of a posterity which never came, that Aldair was seen in all his glory. There, from the kitchens in the vasty deep to the highest chamber overlooking the chimneys of a palace, all exhibited the magnificence of wealth. If, as some aristocratic people hinted, Aldair had a general bad taste, he at least had the good taste to submit to those who had better. All that art had to sell, Aldair could contrive to buy. If, as the proverb says, "*Tout l'esprit du monde ne veut rien à celui qui n'en a pas,*" Aldair must have had either an excess of that valuable quality or none at all, for he paid the highest price for it that it was ever known to fetch in the market. Books, pictures, statues, were all bought by the great incarnation of Curtice and Co., as equitably as his bales of silk and camel's hair.

Aldair had been twice married, and to his credit be it



spoken, both times for love. His first wife was a Miss Elcorn, the beautiful daughter and heiress of Robert Elcorn, of the Stock Exchange. I regret to say there are not wanting envious and malicious persons who intimate that Aldair loved the lady's fortune more than her beautiful person, and that they did not prove a pre-eminently happy pair. But there is no foundation whatever for the assertion, if we except, as we certainly shall, the scandalous gossip of discharged servants. Amongst these is a monstrous story, which is generally believed by people who should know better, that Mrs. Aldair never slept with her husband after the birth of their child, but had a separate chamber, in which she lived alone till the day of her death.

All this improbable scandal was amply refuted by the deep grief Aldair exhibited at her funeral. Even the undertakers were touched by the magnitude of his sorrow, and to this day they remember it so well that there is never a blind down or a kid glove on the knocker at Curtice House, but there are swarms of black-edged business cards found in the letter-box. It is said Aldair spent a fortune on the splendid monument erected to her memory, the thickness of the marble no less than the great Roman letters exemplifying the sincerity of his grief.

It was fit that so tender-hearted a husband should marry again, and it is only justice to his high integrity to suppose, even if his assertion had not put it beyond a doubt, again for love.

Again the object of his affection was an only daughter, again an heiress. Some people have endeavoured to find in this simple coincidence something suspicious. But as an impartial biographer, whose only aim is to exhibit the true character of a great and prosperous man, I am bound to assert I cannot see sufficient evidence to justify a doubt of his disinterestedness. What can we suppose more probable than that an only child, who has had the whole devotion and care of wealthy parents lavished on her, should excel a girl who has received only a fourth or fifth part of that parental nurture? It always appears to me that the whole civilised world has given its verdict in favour of only daughters of rich people, for you will observe such only daughters invariably get

married, while there is seldom an average family of four without an old maid. Of course there are never wanting plenty of men who pit their own private opinion against the world, and elect to seek their felicity in quarternary and quinary sisterhoods, and some of them look uncommonly like having found it too; but half these would have had some *fille unique* if they could.

Aldair's second wife was a woman of some thirty-three at least. This wholesome maturity was doubtless auspicious of happiness. Two sickly children were born, but died early; then another a little more robust, and another, and another, three in all, all delicate but much beloved by their mother, who now became an invalid past all hope of recovery.

One of the most striking points of Aldair's character was outspoken honesty. He knew nothing of secrecy and subterfuge. Thus he never for a moment concealed from Mrs. Aldair that the child of his first wife was his favourite, for as her mother had brought him by far the larger fortune, her daughter was justly entitled to the greater share of his favour and love, which again was another circumstance favourable to domestic harmony.

So happily did matters proceed, that by the time Miss Aldair was ten it was found expedient, lest she should be spoiled by over indulgence, to discontinue for a time the system of home tuition and send her to a kind of protestant convent at Heidleberg. There she had remained till within a year of the present time, when she received the summons to return to the love and happiness of home.

Emily Aldair resembled her dead mother not more in her unusual beauty than in her character, which was of a meek and loving tendency, extremely docile and manageable up to a certain point, which being once reached, it became advisable for governesses and parents to retire and leave her to her own ways, as by no possible coercion would she go any other. Fortunately for Aldair, his former wife had been a woman of strong, almost stern religious principles, which she had instilled into Emily; and now that they had been fostered by the pious literature of the little library of the Heidleberg sisterhood, she was as docile a young lady as ever sacrificed happiness in de-

ference to a parent's wishes. And in truth, Emily might soon have need of all her meekness.

Among the numerous visitors at Curtice House was a certain Isaac Moss, a renegade, or to speak more respectfully, a converted Jew, a dear and rich old friend of Aldair. He had two sons; the elder, a sickly man of thirty, with a diseased spine, but none the less his father's favourite and future heir. The other was three years younger, strong and vigorous, and would have been handsome but for his extremely small eyes and thick, sensual lips, which combined gave the expression of an amorous fox. Aldair disliked him as much as he admired his puny brother. He was, therefore, seldom seen at Curtice House, while the other came constantly with his father. Why Aldair so admired this poor young man it is impossible to say. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, the clear-sighted practical Aldair could no more account for his likes and dislikes than the most sentimental boy that ever fell in love. Perhaps fathers have the same natural predilection for eldest sons, that marriageable men have for only daughters. "My dear young friend," Aldair would say, shaking his feeble hand so violently that the poor fellow nearly cried, "I am so glad to see you get on so well with my dear daughter. We won't say what Emily thinks of you. I am rejoiced to see it, my dear boy—positively rejoiced!" But alas for Aldair's affection! Samuel Moss grew thinner and paler every day, till one morning, the March wind catching him out imperfectly clad, spirited him away to the land of shadows.

Thereupon, smitten with remorse for his unjustifiable partiality, Aldair blotted out his memory in tears and cherished his brother in his stead.

Need we recount how his good qualities, so long hidden, came out one by one as the stars appear when the wintry clouds are rolled away. How Abraham Moss visited Curtice House, and drunk Aldair's wine; how he enjoyed Aldair's society; how he fell even more desperately in love with the rich merchant's favourite daughter than his brother had done, and how Aldair accidentally found it out, and how he talked the matter over with his old friend, and how the delicate subject insensibly merged into a mere financial conversation. But no, these things occur every day, and will occur till a

benevolent government shall relieve parents of the responsibility of preventing children choosing their own partners, and marriages be arranged by a matrimonial Board appointed by Act of Parliament.

(To be continued).

THE OCEAN VOICE.

WHITE sweeps of glancing pinions trail
 Athwart the blackness of the gale,
 Till far inland the sea-birds blown,
 No longer hear the monotone
 Which the low, steady roar of the sea
 Sings near me, near me, near me, evermore.

Breath, freshness, sense of wider air,
 Invite the wearied wanderer here ;
 Grand breadths of flying shadow chase
 The sunlight o'er the pasture's face ;
 And the low, steady roar of the sea
 Sings near me, near me, near me, evermore.

Slant sails that stagger 'neath the blast
 Bow down to us and hurry past—
 Away ! to far-off purple seas,
 Away ! to learn their mysteries,
 And the low, steady roar of the sea
 Sings near me, near me, near me, evermore.

The secrets great of life and death
 Are in the tide's soft sobbing breath ;
 The love and tears of ages gone
 Are in each melancholy tone
 Which the low, steady roar of the sea
 Sings near me, near me, near me, evermore.

FRANCIS H. HEMERY.



OUR COLONIES : THEIR RELATIONSHIP.

IN no country and to no other nationality can the question be put with greater force than to our own, for this little island-home and its small population compared with the millions of continental people, has had more experience and success than any other empire in the work of colonisation.

First of all, therefore, we must consider the two classes of colonies which we possess, and the constitutions upon which the basis of law and government is laid.

The two modes of acquisition by which England has obtained these numerous possessions are—Firstly, by cession or conquest ; secondly, by right of occupancy only. The former are generally known as Crown colonies, and on them legislation is not attained by representative councils, but by decrees of the governor, or the council which he either nominates entirely or in part, and, therefore, the influence of the Crown is supreme and paramount. Hardly any of those held by us on these conditions can be said to be thriving colonies ; they have, as a rule, some definite purpose to serve as posts of defence in our world-wide communication, or havens of refuge on the great pathway of the ocean. It is, therefore, hardly necessary to consider what should be their relationship to the mother country. Let it be granted that they are necessarily in subjection rather than in relationship with the Imperial Government, which would hardly be regarded by the natives as their mother country. We now turn to those colonies which are peopled by the Anglo-Saxon race, and which still owe allegiance to the British Crown.

To them has been granted the privilege and the task of establishing a government, with all its necessary departments

and its multiplicity of arrangements. And to give our race the credit which is due to them, they have not been afraid to undertake the responsibilities of their new position.

There is implanted in the mind of every Englishman, however advanced may be his political opinions, a love and a respect for the land of his birth, and the constitution of the old country has generally been followed as near to the old lines as possible. The governor in all colonies, whatever may be their position in numbers or in power, is appointed by the Crown as the representative of Imperial power. There is next, as a rule, not a House of Lords, but a body of the best-known and most successful of the early settlers, gathered round, or summoned by the governor, to form what may be called the Upper House. As with our own House of Lords, this body represents property and authority, and has necessarily Conservative instincts. But the palladium of British liberty is everywhere the great source of legislative action and self-government, and the House of Representatives, under some name or other, is formed by members, who are the direct representations of the people of the colony. Although the class of persons who emigrate are hardly to be considered Conservative, yet in none of our possessions are we aware that Universal Manhood Suffrage has been adopted with the exception of Victoria.

In all other colonies a property qualification, in some form or other, whether as owner or occupier, has become, as it is in England, the necessary accompaniment of the right to enjoy the suffrage.

So much, therefore, for the ordinary and general constitution of the government of the colony, but the object of this article is to consider what should be its relationship to its mother.

An intense patriotism, an innate belief in a common nationality is that which no government can command, nor any system of legislation ensure. It is, however, a very marked trait in the Anglo-Saxon character, and one for which we may be thankful, as tending to secure and preserve the link between England and her Colonies. It is perhaps a remnant of the old Germanic pride in the Homestead; the common rights of the community, and the tribe. The untranslate-

able meaning which the word "Home" conveys has, not only to the colonist, but to his children, a charm which, though it may be sentimental, is none the less real and important. This sentiment, this feeling should not, must not be laughed at or despised; its value is greater than Acts of Parliament or Treaties of Union, or Conferences, or Protocols, for it is one of the most potent influences which preserve our colonies in loyalty and in allegiance.

Care must be taken that too great a strain is not put upon it, nor are we likely to err in that direction, when we have the history of the last century in our recollection and the conduct of this country towards the United States. Although many of the settlers had left England because they found that there was no home for them in their native land, yet, to their credit be it recorded they did not seek with anxiety, or seize with avidity the opportunity for proclaiming their independence.

Our dearly bought experience has taught us a most salutary lesson, and it is hardly conceivable that we should attempt the follies or the injustice which lost to this country so immense a territory in the new world.

The relation of the colonies to England should not only be friendly but commercial, for the commerce of the country requires an outlet which can nowhere else be so useful and effective.

For India, for Africa, or even for the Continent of Europe, a special and different class of goods must be manufactured, but as a rule in our colonies, English habits, English tastes, and English fashions prevail. There was a time when the remains of the London market, or the offscouring of Manchester were thought good enough "for shipping," but Sydney and Melbourne, Montreal and Toronto, now demand the same novelty, and follow with as quick rapidity the fashions of Paris as London or Brighton. With our present system of Free Trade we can offer to the colonies no greater advantage than we do offer to all the world, but many urge and with much force, that what we give to the Colonies, the Colonies in return might offer to us.

By degrees the various branches of manufacture upon which we pride ourselves in this country, are located, and

develop themselves there, and it hardly appears just or politic that the colonists should insist on placing our exports at an unfair disadvantage by the imposition of a heavy duty, simply to preserve a monopoly for their own inferior or more costly manufactures.

So much for commerce. On the question of legislation the subject has received attention in the opening of this essay.

While we give them the power of legislation and self-government it is necessary also that, to preserve continuity and union, such laws must receive the approval or veto of the Crown's representative exercised in the person of the governor or in certain reserved cases by the responsible advisers of the Crown in England. To suggest any wise or salutary alteration does not appear either feasible or necessary ; but there is one question upon which an amount of public attention has lately been gathering, and which must ere long present itself for decision.

Shall the colonies be asked to defray a part or all the expenses of their own defence? And, secondly, whether it is not their duty to contribute some quota to the large naval and military establishments which the numerous and remote possessions of the empire entail, and which, with the exception of India, fall almost entirely upon the taxpayers of the United Kingdom?

It is a delicate and difficult subject, which must be approached with caution, debated with calmness, and simply left to win its own way by the pleadings of justice rather than by any legal or actual force. This question of national and imperial defence must be put clearly before the colonists from both the English and colonial point of view ; they must be asked if all the advantages are to remain with them and all the duties and responsibilities with us ? Are our manufactures to be barred an entrance, and are our soldiers to be at their service in every emergency ? Is the prestige of England not worth paying for ? or is the glory of the mother country to be for them a thing of pride but not one of cost ? Here are questions to which pages of argument and hours of reasoning might be devoted.

On the question of legal education, legal processes, and the powers of local courts, much might be said ; and although in

many colonies there may be some disadvantages in requiring the members of the bar to be called by the English Inns of Court, there can be no question that the Court of Final Appeal must ever rest in this country. Local passions, party feuds, rather than calm considerations of law and equity, too often mar the decisions of some of our colonial courts, and it is a great advantage for the colonists to be aware that the wholly unprejudiced minds of some of the most distinguished English jurists will be applied to the consideration of their conflicting claims, and with the unfortunate exception of ecclesiastical disputes which have been referred to the Court of Final Appeal, no whisper of unfairness or party-spirit has been uttered against this English tribunal. The relations which at present exist between England and the colonies may not have arrived at the acme of perfection, yet on the whole there are but few apparent points of weakness or missing links in the chain. The colonies have a great future before them ; England is a country with a past history and a present greatness, but they have the advantages of being untrammelled by many necessary surroundings of precedents and vested rights. They can take the mother country as a model, copying her institutions, whilst remedying her defects and avoiding her mistakes, so that the prophecy of them that in another thirty years they will eclipse us in numbers and in power may yet prove true.

H. C. R.





CHARLES DICKENS AS A HUMANISER.

IT is no small credit to a man that he is accounted a humaniser of the people, but it is noteworthy how few have striven for that honour, and that those who have attained to it are fewer still. A man may be a patriot, and an individual of power ; he may be a person who has devoted his lifetime to the spiritual, mercantile, or social benefit of his fellows ; he may have spent his existence in devising means whereby vice may be decreased and morality promoted ; but yet, in the sense in which we write, he is not a humaniser. The immense good which has been wrought by numbers of men who have become great in their day and generation is undoubted, and to the honour of our country be it said, she has produced many such men ; but very few men indeed have humanised and ennobled England in the manner and by the means to which it is our purpose to draw attention here. The power which literature possesses over the minds, the wills, and the dispositions of humanity is on all sides admitted, and when, as often, it is used for purposes of degradation, and directed towards the morals of a nation to corrupt them, then it is that it is employed for the worst and most despicable of ends ; but when, on the other hand, it is sought by its means to improve the condition of the people, to render us less sordid and grovelling, and to soften and fashion in a better mould man's fallen nature, then it is that it becomes a real benefit and a blessing to every race. The literature of this country, considered in its broadest sense, is of a somewhat remarkable kind. It consists of almost every class of writing that we can imagine, and partakes of manifold feelings and opinions ; but when we come to consider the characters and the temperaments of some of our most approved authors,

we are oftentimes smitten with a feeling of compunction for their sakes that their writings should savour so much of levity and unworthiness. This is a noteworthy fact in connection with English literature and one deserving of passing consideration ; one moreover, which has been explained in many ingenious and happy ways—the production of writings which, both in themselves and in the sentiments which they are intended to convey, are so utterly at variance with the inbred character and customary life of the authors. It has often been remarked that the most sound and pointed moralising, the most solid and practical counsel are the productions of those to whom in their private lives, morality is, to say the least, an obsolete virtue, and straight forwardness a veritable myth. Others again have warmly advocated the acceptance by the multitude of doctrines of which they themselves heartily disapprove, and the principles of which, in many other ways, they resolutely oppose. Many similar paradoxes are known to be in existence in the literary world, and many have been those who have sought to explain them. For instance, Charles Lamb, one of the greatest of modern humourists, was a man who drank deeply and kept late hours, to the detriment of his health and the bringing on of his somewhat premature death ; and yet no man has inveighed more strongly against the now too prevalent practice of turning night into day, and accompanying it with dissipated and sottish habits. Demure and odd in his private life, his wit and sarcasm was bright and pungent enough, and very few indeed would have recognised the man himself in the pages of his writings. The domestic existence of Byron is by many believed to have savoured strongly of vice, and having heard this, who can read his works without a feeling of intense surprise ? Many instances might be cited of an extremely paradoxical nature, but fearful of being tiresome we let these suffice.

But we pass on to speak of the humanising influence of Dickens' writings, and of the somewhat extensive observation which this involves. We must not understand that to appeal successfully to the religious and moral inclinations of a man, or to inspire him with a love and a reverence for law, order, and respectability, are the sole means of humanising him ; for a man requires much more than this to be instilled into his

mind before he will become a worthy member of society. Humanity is rough and rugged as a rock, and much effort and well-directed exertion is needed before the natural flintiness is effectually removed. We may compare ourselves to unpolished jewels, rude and unpromising enough to the first glance, but when skillfully manipulated what a change is wrought! Smoothness, evenness, and brilliancy take the place of erst ruggedness, and the former condition is barely recognised. So it is pre-eminently with human nature, and few there are who can fairly lay claim to be called lapidaries of the heart, and polishers and refiners of that which is base and unpromising in frail humanity. Those who can do this effectually are humanisers indeed, and we hope to be able to show, in the course of the few remarks we have to make, that Charles Dickens stood forth prominently as one of this class. This is neither the place nor the time to attempt to defend Dickens against the attacks of his enemies—for he had enemies as well as other mortals—but for the purposes of our point it will be necessary to refer briefly to the fact. There are, unfortunately, those who can find it in them to vilify a man after he is dead and unable to defend himself; but it will be apparent that such are the worst of traducers. It has been alleged against Dickens that he was guilty, not only of levity and unpardonable folly, but of absolute crimes—offences heinous in their character and in contravention of both human and divine laws. To those who have perused his works, especially those to which we shall hereafter draw attention, this may seem to savour of incredibility; but although we deprecate such animadversions as these in the absence of proof, yet we would issue the reminder that this is only following up the plan which is currently believed to have been pursued by so many writers both in this and bygone decades. Dickens, as we have hinted, has been accused of villainy of the worst type and of the most despicable nature; and yet this is the man who has charmed thousands, and for whom, when he died, the nation mourned as for a dear and cherished relative. Widespread and general was the grief throughout the country, when the news was flashed from one end of it to the other that the magic chair was empty; that the quaint and cosy little study

at Gad's Hill—since hallowed by many an affectionate and general recollection—had been deprived for ever of a tenant who had occupied it worthily, and well. England mourned as she had rarely mourned before, and as she could only have done for the Royal Lady on the throne. The melancholy fact threw a sombre gloom over the island-home of the manly and tender-hearted novelist, and peer and peasant alike became saddened by the intelligence. But why such a manifestation of feeling on the death of one who was but a man after all!—and yet a man among men—one of whom the nation has a just cause to be proud! Why these tears, and this universal mourning? Because the country at large felt that it had lost a friend in the departed writer. For Dickens had, by means of his pen, constituted himself a companion of the grave and gay alike, and had shown himself to be the friend of everyone, from the ragged street boy to those who roll in wealth and affluence. He had proved himself a softener of the ruggedness of human nature, and his influence remained when he was deprived by death of the power to charm. Inured to hardship in his early life, and having been acquainted with the harsher side of humanity in his youthful years, Dickens was the man, above all others, to portray the sufferings which many have to endure, to draw moral pictures which he forced the people to admire, and to show up guilt and depravity in its most degrading forms. No man was better acquainted with human nature than Charles Dickens, and no man was so gifted as he with the power to describe it. The scenes which he had witnessed struck deep into his powerful mind, where they were rapidly brought to maturity and shed their influence far and wide. The kindlier emotions which at times burn in every man's breast were nurtured in that of the great novelist, by a well arranged plan of nature, which, unhappily, is but too often matured. The strong mind of the man, assisted and made stronger yet by long and earnest thought in the seclusion of his favourite haunts, drew forth from the innermost depths of his imagination a strain of ideas so marvellous, and so unlike anything which man had ever noticed before, that they surprised even himself; and when they were called into existence, his was the pen, and his the intellect which could fashion them in a way which was

attractive, and so preserve them for the study of the intellectual and the thoughtful. His was the mind to retain what had come to his knowledge, and his was the power to bring it out in all its fulness, to lay it bare with judicious embellishments for the instruction and edification of others. He drew pictures—this Landseer of literature—at which the people are never tired of looking, and he pointed out to men in what guises and in what distorted forms human baseness may be detected, and how to shun and counteract the evil influences which are so widely and so destructively at work. A man among men, he had studied human kind in all the varied forms in which it has existed, and from the results of that study his vigorous mind drew conclusions and pointed inferences such as man had never thought of before him. He could picture vice in all its glaring deformity, and could expose villainy with a sharpness and a sarcasm which no writer has ever yet succeeded in imitating; and not only vice and crime in its worst forms came in for a share of the poignant thrusts of his powerful pen; but meanness and deception, unworthiness and everything low and despicable trembled before his condemnation like a reed before the blast. He hinted at wonderful and astounding probabilities, and pointed at innumerable pictures, horrible and humiliating in their miserable aspects, as the results of the vicious practices of man. His was not the rod to spare those who wilfully and openly offended against the laws of verity, right, and justness; but whilst unsparingly lashing vileness, and every description of iniquity, he sought to show, with all the eloquence of which he was capable, that in the most unpromising and most degraded nature there yet lurked something that was soft and capable of development to the best interests of others—something that was holy, something that was good. He illustrated in a wonderful manner the saying about humanity being human, and made it more than manifest to his readers that although the trace of it in God's creatures might almost be battered out by long-continued crime and the depth of degradation into which they were sunk, yet there was a divinity which lingered still, a something worthy of the light of day which had been "cribb'd, cabin'd, and confin'd" in a very narrow hiding place indeed, and that however much it might have been distorted by

corrupt and baneful influences, it was still there, as a valuable and refreshing oasis in a dreary and desolate wilderness, to prove if more proof were needed, that every lane, however long and crooked, has a turning to something straight and direct at last. For a proof that Dickens' writings have been looked upon as teaching in a wonderful manner that great lesson which so many have failed to learn, and many more yet have failed to practice—how to lead a worthy, true, and Christian life, and not to despise the most degraded of mankind; read what has been said, and said publicly respecting him by preachers of the gospel; and above all others read the testimony of the Rev. Dr. Stanley, the Dean of St. Paul's, given by him in an ever-to-be-remembered sermon preached but a short time after the lamented novelist's death. Referring to the wide human sympathy which irradiated the pages which Dickens wrote, the reverend gentleman said: "However deep his imagination led him to descend into the dregs of society, he still breathed an untainted atmosphere around him; he was still able to show by his own example that even in dealing with the darkest scenes and most degraded characters, genius could be clean and mirth innocent. There is even something higher in his writings, and of which it is well to speak in the House of God, and beside that new-laid grave. In that long series of stirring tales, now for ever closed, there is, amidst all the comic and satiric vein of the genial, loving humourist, a profoundly serious, nay, may I not say a profoundly Christian and evangelical truth, of which we all need to be reminded, and of which he was, in his own way, a special teacher. . . . He laboured to tell all in new—very new words—the old, old story—that there is even in the humblest and worst of mankind a soul of goodness and nobleness, a soul worth redeeming, worth reclaiming, worth regenerating. And if he who is gone has helped to blot out the hard line which too often severs class from class, and has brought rich and poor together, and made Englishmen feel more as one family, he assuredly will not have lived in vain."

But let us see what were the reasons which induced Dickens to turn his attention to this class of literature in preference to any other. Why did he not direct his energies,

powerful as they were, to the development of many other subjects? Why did he not tread in other paths of the literary world—the fine arts, science, history, and many other kinds of writing, which so many have followed? Not for the sake of notoriety, or the sake of doing something which had not been done before, did he write as he did, but because he was a man of feeling and of foresight. Because he was a man who had seen and experienced the harsher and more rugged side of life, had shared its vicissitudes, its dangers, and its entanglements; and he found it to be his duty, and a duty which he discharged with so much credit to himself, to warn coming generations against the so-called ways of the world. The object of Dickens in pursuing the course which he did is plain. He was not anxious for his own personal benefit, although he gained that too, but he was anxious that men should be taught that which they had hitherto failed to learn, and taught it in such a pleasing manner as should readily bring it home to their minds; that they should be warned against that which they are too prone to follow, and which was so antagonistic and detrimental to their best interests. He was not slow to see that men and women required to be directed to the study of that which is noble and elevating in this world, so that they might become better citizens and better people in their respective walks in life. Dickens, as is well-known, gained much of this world's substance by his writings, and he was thus enabled to live in comfort during his latter years, although his fertile mind and his ready pen were not idle to the last. But what is remembered as a prominent trait in his character, and one of which the world will be slow to lose sight, is that his desire was ever that others should benefit, as well as himself, by what he wrote, that they should be guided by his experience—and a wide experience it was—into the paths of uprightness, charity, and rectitude in this world. Unlike many writers of his own and other days, he did not allow himself to be drawn away to that which would result simply in his own private aggrandisement, and minister to his own selfish ends; but he made it a life-study to benefit his fellow-men, not only by his example—and a shining one it was—but by producing something which should dignify and ennoble, as well as charm and please—something

which should, whilst raising the world to a better appreciation of herself, show to her people that they were created for worthier and holier ends than those of a mere mechanical existence, and to show it better than anything which had yet been. He endeavoured to bring his fellow-men to a true and just conception of what there is that is bright, and beautiful, and lasting in this fleeting world, as well as bringing a livelihood and lasting fame to himself. This is what Dickens strove to do, and how well and how nobly he did it all the world knows. We all have a mission here. This, no doubt, was Dickens's mission, for it was the great aim of his life ; and how successfully he fulfilled that mission, and how worthily he attained that aim, is known and appreciated by every fireside and in every home.

In turning to the pages of his writings but for a single instant, we find a full and a solid corroboration of all our previous remarks. We find pictures there at which we cannot look without a flush of pride, and which it is impossible to contemplate without emotion and a profound feeling of reverence and love. We are brought face to face with glowing scenes of home-life in all its tenderness and beauty. We are shown illustrations of sympathy and gentle care which we regret are but too uncommon in our rough, every-day existence. We are taught how to exercise a kindly regard for our fellows and all those into whose society chance has cast us; how to tend those in sickness, and respect and revere those in health; how to comfort those in distress, and how to succour the wretched, the degraded, and the fallen ; and whilst cheerfulness and mirth overspread the pages at which we are looking, there is underneath the whole a vein of genuine sympathy, an under-current of moral devotion and tender solicitude and love which cannot fail to create a lasting impression. We might dilate for pages on the sublimity which permeates the writings of the great novelist, but we pass on to point out a few examples, and to submit a few proofs of their hallowing influence. And, in justice to the shade of him who is gone, let us select that work which was *his* favourite one, that on which he evidently expended so much care, and from the execution of which he parted with a sore pang of regret. We allude, of course, to "David

"Copperfield." We have in this book a masterpiece of fiction, a work which has made people laugh and cry almost at the same moment; and whilst exciting our risibilities, has touched, as with a poignard, some of the tenderest emotions of the human heart. Was it for nothing that Dickens wrote this book? Had he no purpose, no righteous end in view when his lively imagination conceived the creatures to which he here introduces us with so much force? From the death-scene, in which the hero's mother took such a mournfully prominent part, to that in which his child-wife Dora bore a no less necessary share, we are presented to a miscellaneous array of personages such as never before or since have found place within the pages of any one book. They crowd down upon us with a lively semblance of reality those shadows of a history which has its counterpart in many a man's life-time; and they teach us lessons of charity, forbearance, and gratitude as valuable as they are diversified. We love to linger over them—over that motley assemblage—for they recal to us much of the experience of our own lives, and they tell us and warn us of much more with which we may yet have to contend. We trace the life progress of young David with a strange admixture of pain and gratification, and we pore over his marriage with his child-wife with a weird mingling of pleasure and distress. What a brief, but what an important existence poor Dora has! She first appears to us as a young, sprightly, and confiding creature, and so she continues to the end—an end which is beautiful and touching indeed. The hero seems to have had apprehensions that she was to be taken from him, and when all around him was so bright and joyous, and the worst was not yet feared, he observes, he anticipates, and breaks out thus:—"But as that year wore on Dora was not strong. I had hoped that lighter hands than mine would help to mould her character, and that a baby-smile upon her breast might change my child-wife to a woman. It was not to be. The spirit fluttered for a moment on the threshold of its little prison, and unconscious of captivity took wing." A little while, and he is warned against what he has so long feared. His friends seek to prepare him for what is to follow, but he needs no preparation. "Do I know now that my child-wife will soon leave me? They have

told me so; they have told me nothing new to my thoughts; but I am far from sure that I have taken that truth to heart. I cannot master it. I have withdrawn by myself many times to-day to weep. I have remembered Who wept for a parting between the living and the dead. I have bethought me of all that gracious and compassionate history, I have tried to resign myself and to console myself, and that I hope I may have done imperfectly; but what I cannot firmly settle in my mind is that the end will absolutely come." But it does come, and how it comes we are told in language which we venture to think stands unequalled for pathos, for power, for tenderness of expression. And then she who has been the guide of himself and the lovely impersonation of frailty which he cherished as his wife, is called upon to exercise a higher and a closer influence over him. Ere long he calls her wife too, and on the eve of his doing so he remembers her who is gone, and he feels sure of her approval, as the following passage testifies,—“And, oh! Agnes, even out of thy true eyes, in that same time, the spirit of my child-wife looked upon me, saying it was well; and winning me through thee to tenderest recollections of the blossom that had withered in its bloom.” His success in winning her whom he had so long admired and loved finds expression as follows:—“We stood together in the same old-fashioned window at night, when the moon was shining—Agnes with her quiet eyes raised up to it, I following her glance. Long miles of road then opened out before my mind, and, toiling on, I saw a ragged, wayworn boy, forsaken and neglected, who should come to call even the heart now beating against mine his own.” It is, perhaps, hard to decide between two such creations as Dora and Agnes, which is the more beautiful; but it seems that the latter did much to replace the former, cherished as the recollection of her was to the hero's mind. Dickens's creative powers here seem to have run riot—to have astonished and staggered even himself, and as he pens the closing passage of the healthiest and most beautiful of his works, he appears to have entered so deeply into the spirit of what he had been writing that he places himself in the position of his hero, and parts from his shadowy family as sorrowfully and as regretfully as if they indeed had being. Or else why do find him penning such words as the

following:—"And now, as I close my task, subduing my desire to linger yet, these faces fade away. But one face, shining on me like a heavenly light, by which I see all other objects is above them and beyond them all, and that remains. I turn my head and see it in its beautiful serenity beside me. My lamp burns low, and I have written far into the night, but the dear presence, without which I were nothing, bears me company. Oh! Agnes, oh! my soul, so may thy face be by me when I close my life indeed; so may I, when realities are melting from me, like the shadows which I now dismiss, still find thee near me, pointing upward!"

With these examples of the humanising effects of Dickens's writings we purpose closing our present remarks, reserving for a future number a host of instances of other kinds in which the genius of the great novelist stands nobly forth as the softener of the ruggedness of human nature. There may be those who would cavil at the notion of holding him up as a mirror in which to see all the varying phases of humanity; but even those who have denied his power to inculcate Christian feeling, and to stimulate mankind to lead a nobler life, have admitted that the tendency of his writings was to make men feel kindly towards the outcast and downtrodden among their fellows, "and that he has thus fostered" that benevolence which he so frequently and ably depicts. With the view of expanding this feeling, and pointing out how much Dickens has done to implant in the mind of man a humane and kindly consideration for the welfare of those about him, we purpose ere long to lay before our readers a few more of the impersonations which have gained for his writings world-wide celebrity.

ARNOLD QUAMOCUIT.





BY THE RIVER.

THE joyous river sang a song that day
That pleased my spirit well,
It danced and sparkled on in wanton play
Along the leafy dell.

Now gliding swiftly 'neath the pleasant shade
Of over-arching trees,
Whose drooping boughs were delicately swayed!
By every passing breeze.

And now 'twixt mossy rocks it swept along,
Where trout glanced to and fro,
Charming my ear with its delicious song
As towards the pool below,

O'er many a crag, it shot with silvery gleam,
Descending, veiled in spray;
And there I sat, as in a waking dream,
That burning summer's day.

Dreaming alas! of bygone, happy years
And sunny days long fled!
Dreaming of blighted hopes, and ancient fears,
And of the cherished dead—

The dead who sleepeth in her lonely bier
Where clustering roses blow,
Whose clear, sweet tones again I seemed to hear:
Amid the streamlet's flow.

But other sounds disturbed my reverie soon—
The silvery laugh of girls
That softly mingled with the river's tune,
And soon their loosened curls

Dark as the raven's wing, or bright as gold,
By glimpses through the trees
I saw; and there from out the forest old
They came by two's and three's.

Started a moment at the sight of man,
With perhaps a deeper glow
On *their* fair cheeks, as down the rocks they ran
Towards the stream below.

Like Hama-dryads exquisitely fair,
From rock to rock they bound
With sparkling eyes and breeze abandoned hair,
The while the woods resound

With their sweet voices; doubly sweet to me,
Who knew alas! too well
How girlhood's presence, and her guileless glee,
To scenes of wood and dell

Will ever lend new charms; but up the stream
Their forms were lost to view,
Their mirth grew fainter, and my waking dream
Had somehow vanished too!

SHERIDAN WILLS.





WHAT WILL SOCIETY SAY?

A NOVEL.

By MERVYN MERRITON,

Author of "Romances of the Chivalric Ages," "The Ringwoods of Ringwood," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XII.

THE exhibition, during a very few days, of the well-appointed *barouche à la Daumont* sufficed to satisfy the Boulogne *flâneurs* as to the proper patronymic of its occupants, and to reduce the chaos of Delstone, Belstone, or Bloodstone to the form of Leadstone.

The Vicomte de Foix was among the last to acquire this information, owing to its wide dissimilarity from Smitte-Smisse. Moreover, to the latest hour of his acquaintance with the family in question, he persisted in pronouncing the name Leston.

The admiration he expressed for Juliana was, if possible surpassed by the ardour of the friendship he formed for the "chef of the house of Leston" during the three days which that personage spent in the bosom of his family, about a week after the instalment of said family at Château R. If the Anglomaniac was sometimes mystified by Mr. Leadstone's odd phraseology and queer grammar, he placed it all to the score of English eccentricity. The possibility that a man who—according to Miss Plaistow—possessed a revenue of nearly half a million francs, with a *château* and territory of vast extent, who gave his wife an equipage of almost imperial splendour, who was thoroughly versed in all the mysteries of *le sport*, and whose cook was a petticoated Cordon Bleu,

should be of defective education had never for a moment occurred to him. His relations with the family speedily became intimate. His perfect *savoir faire* and affability rendered him agreeable to Mrs. Leadstone. The Squire liked his robust faith in England and the English. Juliana associated him in her mind with a person upon whom her thoughts now dwelt very often—too often, she was forced to admit to herself, since, to all appearance, she and that person had only met, as thousands upon thousands do meet, never again to meet—never again to cross one another's path.

Only once had this person been in question since his departure. "A gentleman-like young man, that friend of yours, Vicomte," Mrs. Leadstone had said to the latter on meeting him a couple of days after the ball.

"Which friend, Madame Leston? I have so many."

"Naturally; you are so popular. I mean the young man you introduced to us on Friday."

"On Friday? Which Friday?"

"Last Friday—at the ball."

"The ball of Friday last? Voyons un peu. I only remember one man—he not so very young—who won of me six hundred francs at billiards."

"I know nothing about your playing billiards with him. What I do know is that he danced three times with Juliana."

"Dansé! Il a dansé? Oui, oui, now I remember. Très joli garçon—un peu sauvage—idées fantasques. But enfin, homme du meilleur monde. I met him at the Hôtel des Bains, where we both descended."

"Met him there for the first time?"

"Parbleu! And all leads to think also for the last time. He gone to Paris."

"Then you don't know anything about him—his family, property, and so on?"

"How would you that I know anything about him—a mere passing acquaintance?"

"Of course, you know his name?"

"I never ask it."

"Rather strange, Vicomte."

"Strange? What strange? Ha, ha, ha! I assure you, Madame Leston, if I take the trouble to inquire, and keep in

my memory the names, origin, moyens de vivre, of all the English I amuse myself to make acquaintance with, I obliged to have a memorandum book large like a banker's ledger."

"Dear me, Vicomte! We—I mean Miss Plaistow and I—took that young man for one of your most intimate friends."

"And why, Madame Leston?"

"From the terms he and you appeared to be on together."

"Ah! C'est à mourir de rire! You, really eccentric, you other English. Parole d'honneur, if I meet that young man when he return here—as he tell me he mean to do, *en route* for England—I doubt whether I know his face among a hundred other English I shall have become acquainted with depuis son départ."

To Juliana, who sat by during this conversation, the concluding phrase brought—through a cloud of disappointment—one gleam of consolation. Although the Vicomte was unable to say anything about her late dancing partner calculated to recommend him to other members of her family than herself, yet there was at least a possibility that she might see him again during her stay at Boulogne.

For some days past—that is to say ever since the Squire's return to Lentworth—Mrs. Leadstone, combining her forces with those of Joan Lady Oglethorpe, had been planning an advanced movement in support of the famous Cotherstone matrimonial scheme.

The Honourable Claude had been induced by his energetic great-aunt to promise a visit of some duration—a visit of business, to Boulogne-sur-Mer between the two great "meetings" of Goodwood and Doncaster, at the sacrifice of his grouse and early partridge-shooting. For it is almost needless to observe that men of the Claude Cotherstone stamp, be they neediest among the needy, never lack the means to follow in due succession the routine of fashionable occupations, however costly. Claude had been exhorted by the wily dowager, in her latest missive on the subject, to hold himself in readiness, and when summoned, to come quickly, and come alone! This, read by the light of his aunt's former warnings, he understood to point at his friend Marcus Aubrey; so, while laughing—and rightly—at the notion that danger could lurk in that

quarter, in order that his zealous aunt might not accuse him of throwing away a single chance, he maintained a discreet silence towards the Guardsman about his projected visit to the cockney Anglo-French watering-place.

It may be well to observe here that the "little game" Mrs. Leadstone has been mentioned as having in view, is no other than the bringing to maturity of this same matrimonial scheme during the Boulogne "season." She feels that one necessary element of success is Mr. Leadstone's absence from the scene of action. She suspects that he holds the Honourable Claude personally in no great respect; and she fears lest his sturdy frank nature might revolt at any attempt to sway their daughter's sentiments on the subject of marriage. No doubt she knows the full value of the latent power she possesses, as well over her husband as of others around her, in the shape of "scenes," and strong appeals to sentiment; but it is part of her tactics to keep those violent remedies for extreme cases, and not to weaken their effect by too frequent use.

"My dear Juliana, how delightful!" was Mrs. Leadstone's exclamation, one afternoon, when she had read a few lines from a letter received by the English day-mail: "Imagine our dear, darling old Lady Oglethorpe coming over on purpose to be with us, the day after to-morrow!"

"Lady Oglethorpe!"—this somewhat frigidly from Juliana; "The very last person I should have expected."

"Well, but isn't it charming, dearest?" Juliana made no answer; she was reflecting. Mrs. Leadstone returned to the charge with, "You know how fond she is of you," but was interrupted by Juliana's rather abrupt question—"Is Lady Oglethorpe coming alone?"

"Well, she makes no mention of anybody else."

"Please turn to her letter, mamma; you have not read it through yet."

Mrs. Leadstone ran her eye quickly through the letter, and then said: "No—not a word about any other person. Of course she brings her maid. She says her chief object is to—" reading—"spend a couple of quiet weeks with you and your darling girl, untrammelled by the observances imposed upon us in places where we are known."

"A fortnight, mamma! that's a good long visit."

"Not when one is fond of people, my dear."

"Oh, no! certainly not; and as *you* are fond of Lady Oglethorpe, no wonder you should be pleased."

"My child, it's the first time I ever heard you speak against Lady Oglethorpe."

"I'm not doing so, mamma—on the contrary, I rather like the old lady."

"Yes, I know you do, on account of her plain speaking."

Mrs. Leadstone hastened to thrust this in, declining to accept the meaning obviously intended by Juliana, who, she perceived, if pressed home, was prepared to add something like—"But I object to her belongings!"

"Inasmuch as I hate artifice," Juliana resumed, "all that savours of the reverse pleases me; but as to feeling any sympathy with old ladies who paint, and wear great black fronts, and have loud voices, and tell stories that make girls look away and feel uncomfortable, it's impossible. So on the whole, I may say I know many people whose society I should prefer to that of Joan Lady Oglethorpe."

Mrs. Leadstone felt that she should have liked to rap her daughter's knuckles with the ruler in the inkstand; but she constrained herself to say, smilingly, "Our dear Dowager is of a past age—of women as well as men."

Juliana continued, without noticing this extenuating remark, "At all events, I hope she'll choose a hotel as far from the Château as possible."

"Why, my sweet love, she's coming to stay *at* the Château."

"With us, mamma?"

"At least, she is so kind as to offer herself."

"Isn't that what papa would call rather a cool kindness?"

"Perhaps so, and perhaps your papa, who is not always measured in his language, would make use of some stronger epithet. But your papa would be wrong. These things may be done between such intimate friends as we are."

"A great deal too intimate!" Juliana thought, but she said rather stiffly, "Well, mamma, you know best."

"My darling Juliana, I know that Lady Oglethorpe, rouge, wig, freedom of speech and all, moves in the highest circles, and that her friendship cannot but be advantageous to you;

so now, if you please, go to your music, or your books, or anything you like, and leave me to answer her kind letter, which I shall do, telling her you'll welcome her, whenever she likes to come, with one of the sweetest of those smiles she's never tired of praising."

"Say what you think fit for yourself, mamma, dear, but pray do not commit me too deeply to Lady Oglethorpe—you know not what disappointment you may be preparing for the poor old lady." And Juliana left the room with a smile on her lip and a flash in her eyes that told her mother her words contained as much of earnest as of jest.

Left to herself, Mrs. Leadstone sat down to reflect before she wrote her letter. She did not at all like Juliana's present mood. Indeed, for several days past there had been a self-asserting air about that young lady which had given her (Mrs. Leadstone) much food for reflection.

This proposal of a visit by the Dowager was of course part of a settled scheme, and was made with the understanding that it should be postponed in case Mrs. Leadstone might think such delay advisable.

The result of Mrs. Leadstone's consideration of the subject was this; "The Dowager will do more harm than good if she comes at present—I'll put her off!"

Accordingly a letter to that intent was written. In due course another was received, wherein the Dowager regretted deeply that an utterly unlooked for combination of small events would, for a fortnight or thereabouts, prevent her having the great pleasure she had promised herself, &c. &c.

Juliana, under the menace of Joan Lady Oglethorpe's visit was a different girl from Juliana when, two days later, she received the intelligence that—for the present at least—she was to be spared the infliction of that old lady's presence; for it was an infliction, in that it seemed to her to portend the advent of another personage still less sympathetic to her—to wit, the Honourable Claude Cotherstone!

"I have done well," then thought Juliana's mother. "A fortnight's delay can make little difference in the end."

It is very doubtful whether, in her daughter's present mood, any result favourable to her scheme would have come out of the Dowager's visit as originally planned; but beyond all

doubt the fortnight's delay thus interposed was, as the result proved, destined to be fruitful of obstacles to the success of that same scheme.

Two days after the receipt of the Dowager's second letter, an English telegram reached Mrs. Leadstone from a London Club-house, thus conceived:

"T. Leadstone, to Mrs. Leadstone.—Off to Paris on business by this night's mail-train. Will write to you from Paris."

Hereupon Mrs. Leadstone congratulated herself that the ground would be clear, during such stay at Boulogne as her husband might possibly make on his return from Paris to London, of any evidence bearing upon her matrimonial plottings.

We will suppose a week from the date of Leadstone's telegram to have elapsed.

The express train between Paris, Calais, and the North, had just left the Northern Railway station in Paris.

In one of the first-class carriages the only two passengers were two Englishmen, one young—say under thirty—the other apparently about sixty-four or five. They sat on opposite sides of the carriage.

The younger man produced from his dressing-bag a couple of Paris morning papers, a volume of Racine, and another of Corneille.

The senior took from his unusually large and solid despatch-box a copy of the London *Times* of the previous day, and a bundle of documents, some in print, some in writing.

For half an hour neither spoke, not even to comment Anglically on the weather; yet it is worthy of mention that each, from time to time, glanced stealthily at the other, with an air of mutual but imperfect recognition.

The older of the two was the first to break the silence. Handing to the younger part of the *Times*, he said in a somewhat loud and grating, though not disagreeable voice, "Like to see the *Times*, sir? Not much in it. Somehow, there never seems to be anythink. Still you know it *is* the *Times*; not such another paper in the 'ole world!"

"Thank you, sir," the younger traveller replied, holding out his hand.

"Ah! Stop a bit! I'm a givin' you the supplement. Not,

in your line more than mine, eh? Lady's sheet that there—**Marriages—Births—Deaths.**"

"Well," the young man replied, taking the paper proper, "I've no expectations from anybody likely to die, and I don't know much about the marrying world. As for the other ——"

"Time enough for both," the elderly party hastened to exclaim jocularly. "But now, sir, I'm a goin' to ask you a question. Beggin' your pardon before'and if it should be misplaced—Isn't your name Aylesmere?"

"Yes, it is, sir."

"Mr. Francis Aylesmere. I thought I couldn't be mistook. And now that I've made you out—look at me, and try to do ditto."

"I have been looking, sir, and I have been trying. I feel sure you and I have met before—though it must have been long—very long ago."

"Right, sir, right! Very long ago indeed it was. I was then—but never mind that! Well, Mr. Francis, my name's Leadstone."

"Mr. Leadstone! Now I remember you perfectly—Mr. Leadstone, of Lentworth!" said Frank, with a sadness which he could not conceal, and which apparently the owner of Lentworth was kindly-natured enough to attribute to its right origin; for he said, "Ah! Mr. Francis, a strange world! hups and downs—downs and hups! But who'd ha' thought o' you and me comin' across each other, arter all these years, on a furrin' railway?"

"Not surprising at all, Mr. Leadstone. Railways tempt everybody to go everywhere. I went to Paris because I had a fancy to see a new play at a new theatre there, and I stayed ten days to see other plays at other theatres. No doubt you've been there for some less frivolous purpose."

"Business, Mr. Aylesmere—business. I seldom travels for anythink else—leastways o' my own free will. Tell ye what I went to Paris for this time. I needn't 'ardly say I don't confine myself to landed investments alone. No, sir, no! Two and three-quarters per cent. isn't quite enough on one's 'ole capital in these days. One must get five and even six per cent. on some o' one's money. Well, I bought a lot of

East Middleshire Junction scrip, guaranteed five per cents. of a party who ——"

Needless and slightly tedious to follow Mr. Leadstone verbatim. Enough that his desire to speculate to the modest extent of endeavouring to get five and three-quarters per cent. for his money had led him to buy railway bonds which proved to have been unlawfully put on the market by a dishonest agent. Thence had arisen technical difficulties necessitating an interview with somebody or another in Paris. All this was so utterly uninteresting to Frank Aylesmere that he could not force his mental powers to follow the story, preferring to pursue the train of thought, painful as it was, which arose out of this strange encounter with the man filling the territorial throne occupied by his ancestors for centuries past.

Rough, and occasionally coarse, as was Leadstone in his ways, a certain delicacy of thought was inseparable from his excellent heart, and comprehending the sort of emotion likely to overpower his young fellow-traveller on the occasion of their meeting, he himself voluntarily lapsed into silence, and turned to the contents of his voluminous despatch-box ; presently, wearied by these, he doffed his spectacles, drew his travelling-cap over his ears, and made himself up for a nap.

Amid the silence that followed, Frank himself insensibly dozed off into forgetfulness ; and both slept till the train reached Amiens.

"As well stretch one's legs—what say you, Mr. Aylesmere?" asked Leadstone, awakened by the stopping of the train.

Frank assented to the proposition, and being nearest the platform, opened the door, and got out. "I breakfasted lightly," he said, leading the way to the *salle-à-manger*, "I shall take a *bouillon* and some *plat*, with a half-bottle of *Macon*."

Mr. Leadstone followed him, saying, "Do as you like—a pint of Guinness is more my style, with the solidest dish that's to be got here—not saying much for solidness neither. *Hullo ! Garçon !* Bring me some of that roast, or baked, or stewed beef there!" Then again to Frank—"Do you know, Mr. Aylesmere, I've got my family at Boulong, for what Mrs.

Leadstone calls the season. I don't stay with 'em much myself, but gives 'em a look every now and then. Well, sir, I've persuaded Madam—as I suppose she's called now—to have everythink in the eatin' and drinkin' line as little French as possible, leastways, when I'm there. By the way, I suppose you don't stop at Boulong?"

"Yes I do, Mr. Leadstone. I propose to stay a few days there before I return to London. I'm very fond of Boulogne."

"I see, Mr. Francis, you've got the right way o' pronouncin', which I'm sorry to say I hain't. But that's natural enough—you was eddicated there. I once went over to see your poor mother—I and your uncle. Talkin' o' the Colonel, I saw him a couple o' months or so ago—Gettin' quite the old man, Colonel Briarly is. I went for the character of a butler—man had lived some time with him—name o' Phibbs—you may remember the man?"

"Phibbs! Perfectly."

"Well, he's servant with us now—smart servant he is too. I asked the Colonel about you, and I must tell you, somehow he didn't seem best pleased wi' you. He said you'd took to stage playin', I think it was—Yes, yes—it was stage playin'. So I says, says I, young people must amuse theirselves. Then he flares up, and cries out, 'Amuse be ——,' never mind what!—'Why the blazes didn't Frank stick to the Foreign Office?'"

"Well, Frank will tell you that himself, Mr. Leadstone; He found the Foreign Office a very good place to see life from, but a very bad one to gain a living by."

"Just what I should 'ave imagined, Mr. Francis."

"And so I cut it, Mr. Leadstone, cut it, and adopted a profession for which I felt I had a vocation."

"What might that be?"

"The stage."

"The stage! You a professional hactor—actor!"—This last after a skirmish with the aspirate: "No, hang it all!—not so bad as that, surely?"

Frank could not help laughing at the honest indignation that beamed in the eyes of the Squire of Lentworth, which afforded him an additional proof, if he required one, of the universality of the social ban placed upon his occupation. "Mr.

Leadstone," he presently resumed, "I am an actor by profession, and what's more, I make by it a handsome income—an income that enables me to live like a gentleman, and save money to boot; this I'll be hanged if I could have done with the wretched stipend I drew from Her Majesty's Treasury for my Downing Street services."

"Indeed, Mr. Francis! that puts quite another face on the business. And now I come to think on't, I've read somewhere how large fortunes ha' been made by actors. But it strikes me they mostly wasn't kept—all spent again. An unthrifty set I'm afeard you've been and cast in your lot with."

"Ah! Mr. Leadstone, you and I know that fine fortunes are spent by others than actors."

Leadstone shook his head meaningly.

"That we do, indeed," he said; "well, well, as I remarked afore, it's a life o' hups and downs—downs and hups. Anyhow, don't be down-hearted, my young friend, if you'll allow me to call you so"—taking Frank's hand warmly. "You're young, and you seem to have lots of true English pluck. I'll tell you what—if I had a son (which it's God's will I should not have) I'd obleege him to take to some business or profession, and I'd tell him a story I've read—perhaps heerd from my wife—how some young fellow's father asked somebody—a famous judge or chancellor—what was the best way to get to heminance at the bar. He said to the father, 'Let him first come into his own fortune, and spend that; next marry a girl with a fortune, and spend that; get a third left him unexpectedly, and spend that. *Then* he'll know the wally o' money, and work for it himself in earnest!' But there's the whistle—we must be off to our carriage."

"Ah!" Frank said to himself, as they crossed the platform, his thoughts bridging over the old anecdote, "I remember hearing that he has only a daughter. To think that Tom Leadstone's daughter should be heiress of Lentworth! I wonder what sort of a girl she is!"

CHAPTER XIII.

WE are obliged to anticipate the arrival of the express train at Boulogne.

Mrs. Leadstone had been prepared by a letter from Paris to expect "L.," as he sometimes signed himself in writing to her. He would stay, he said, three or four days—perhaps longer. He requested her to "send or come with the carriage to meet him," &c., &c.

Mrs. Leadstone descended that morning with "one of her bad headaches." It frequently happened that she had those bad headaches on days of promised—not to say threatened—marital arrivals. "All my wretched nervous system, you know!" was her formula, when alluding to them. Juliana was not surprised to hear of this particular headache; on the other hand, she was pleased when told that she might go alone in the carriage to meet her father. As the weather had a menacing appearance the close carriage was recommended. In this fact there was further ground of satisfaction to Juliana. The close carriage was a light, pair-horse landau, and she cared little for that display which formed a large item in her mother's estimate of happiness.

The train being due some minutes past five, exactly at five the Leadstone landau and its magnificent greys, driven by Mr. Holmes in wig and half-dress livery, and attended—to Juliana's relief—not by the colossal Edward, but by an inferior powdered functionary ignobly hight John, drew up without the station.

Returning to the particular compartment wherein we travelled with Mr. Leadstone and Frank Aylesmere from Paris to Amiens, as the train now enters the Boulogne station, we hear the elder passenger say to the younger, "Well, then Mr. Aylesmere, it's a settled thing. I put you down at your 'otel, and you dine with us at 'alf arter seven."

"Since you are so kind, Mr. Leadstone, I can't refuse you any longer, though really ——"

"Oh! if it's settled, it's settled. So then, if you'll look arter our registered luggage—this is my ticket—I've got two

bags, one portmanteau, one 'at-case—all black—marked T. L. very big, I'll pass through to the front and see about the carriage. Very likely there'll be nobody in it, but if Mrs. Leadstone is, I can promise you——"

It will be as well to leave the good man's promise unrecorded. Here may be an illustration of a French paraphrase of a well-known proverb—*L'homme propose et la femme dispose!*

Off flies the steam with deafening rush—the furious whirr of many wheels gradually becomes a resounding rumble—from many successive French voices arise shouts of "*Boulogne! Boulogne! Dix minutes d'arrêt! Boulogne! Boulogne!*" the doors of carriages are opened, and travellers turn out, as may be, by one's, two's, three's, half-dozens.

"You may trust everything to me in the luggage way, Mr. Leadstone—great and small. They let no servants through to the platform. No English free access here. All military *régime*."

"Very well, Mr. Aylesmere, you'll find me with the carriage."

It will take the younger traveller a good quarter of an hour to get all things straight, and ultimately place the common impedimenta in the care of a porter, who, though employed by that Northern Railway presided over by a Rothschild, is allowed to assure the public that he is *not* paid by that company, but empowered to levy his own tariff on the public!

If Frank had to do battle with Custom House officials, a Commissionnaire would for a fee of tenpence save him all trouble whatever. As it is, he, in common with travellers in general, is hypothetically open to the imputation of an intent to defraud the city of its dues on liquors, poultry, garden stuff, and the like; and until he has satisfied the Octroi people that his patent portmanteaus, neat leather bags, and solid hat-cases have not been made receptacles for the above produce, he cannot have the same taken away. While he stands resignedly looking on at the doings of these exasperating officials, Mr. Leadstone and Juliana are conversing through the carriage windows without the station.

We suppose their meeting—a very affectionate one, for they dearly love one another—concluded.

"So, dearest, you're alone, eh? Tell me about mother."

"Mamma. Please don't accustom me to say mother. I like it, but——"

"Mamma doesn't. I'm up to it all. Howsomever, we're alone."

"Mrs. Belstrode used to tell us we must always do, when we're alone, just what we ought to do in company, so as to prevent our getting into bad habits."

"I've no doubt she was right, so I'll say mamma. 'Ow is the dear mamma?"

"Very well; only one of her bad headaches."

Mr. Leadstone screwed up his mouth comically, and said, "I just thought it likely she might have one of 'em to-day. Suppose she'll be all right by dinner-time?"

"Oh yes, mamma never is ill—at least, she never lets it be seen that she's ill, when there's a dinner-party."

"Dinner party! Who's comin'?"

"Miss Plaistow, that amusing Viscomte de Foix, and somebody from Middleshire. Guess who it is!"

"Shouldn't wonder if one of the Berringtons, perhaps both, had turned up."

"One has—Mr. Miles. But there's somebody else. You'll never guess, so I'll tell you—Mr. St. Ives."

"What, the Priest! The Reverend Father Bernard? Ha! ha! ha! On his way to Rome, perhaps. I wish he and his kidney would go there, and stay there. The only fit place for their postures and hantics—antics I mean. Well, now you've told me your moth—mamma's share of the dinner-party, I'll tell you mine. Oh, ay! I've got a friend in tow for dinner—a young one, too—and a deuced good-looking one—a young fellow I'm mighty pleased to introduce among us."

"Indeed! Why, papa, you seem quite excited."

"Do I? Ha! ha! ha! Perhaps I am. But I'm more par—ti—cu—lar—ly (pet word of mamma's, you know) glad to have him at dinner to-day, because young old Berrington's coming."

"Ah! Mr. Berrington knows him?"

"Better even than I do."

"Anybody connected with Middleshire?"

"Humph! No and yes both."

"Papa, dear, you're bringing riddles from Paris."

"My darling, I'm bringing a young man—a gentleman all up his back—who's much to be pitied, and I say much to be honoured, because, bein' poor through other's faults, he isn't above settin' his shoulder to the wheel, and manfully workin' for his livin'. I met him in the train, and persuaded him to come and be introduced to mamma and you—young Mr. Francis Aylesmere, once of Lentworth!"

"Mr. Aylesmere! Good gracious, papa! you quite take away my breath. I should have thought nothing could be so painful to him as——"

"Ah! there he is, lookin' out for me. Doesn't see me. I must—Stay! I'm agoin' to bring him up—promised to drop him at his 'otel."

And "papa" rushed away, beckoning to John to follow him, in the direction of a crowd now issuing from the station door.

Tom Leadstone, large and obese, was not the sort of man to thread a crowd easily; so, finding himself repelled in his attempts to make straight for the object of his search, he tried to reach Frank by skirting the crowd. In the meantime Frank was vainly looking this way and that for his fellow-traveller. There were four private carriages in waiting. Of course one of these must belong to the Leadstones. But which? He might scrutinise them all by the hour without discovering any special indication as to their ownership. Suddenly his gaze was attracted—fascinated—by a person sitting in one of the four.

Was it possible? There, looking from the window of that dashing landau! Yes, yes, it was she—his partner at the ball—Juliana.

In a moment Leadstones, Lentworths, introductions, dinners, all became enveloped in a mental mist. Scarcely conscious of his actions, and laden as he was with bags, coats, canes, and umbrellas, he crossed over to the carriage from the window of which Juliana looked forth.

As for Juliana herself, the sudden transition by which her thoughts were whirled from the sort of interest recently aroused in her by her father's mention of Mr. Francis Aylesmere, to the spectacle of this young man, whose image had of

late been so constantly present to her imagination, now standing before her, was absolutely overpowering; and unable to speak, she could only, with flushed cheeks and anxious look, await the new comer's opening words.

"I—I beg pardon," were those words, "I trust I am not presumptuous in recognising you——"

He had no time to say more, being interrupted by a shout from behind him of, "Here he is, John, at the carriage door. This way—come on! Ha! ha! ha! So you've found it out by yourself, eh, Mr. Aylesmere? My dear Juliana, I must do the introductory. Mr. Francis Aylesmere, Miss Leadstone; Miss Leadstone, Mr. —. But, bless my soul, you seem amused, both of you!"

"Amused is not the right word, Mr. Leadstone—at least. speaking for myself, I am happy to tell you I have already made your daughter's acquaintance."

"I see you have—pretty quickly too," said the mystified Leadstone.

"Oh! but before to-day, papa," Juliana broke in; "Mr. Aylesmere was my partner—my only partner at the only ball I have yet been to here. You must remember my writing to you about that ball?"

"To be sure—to be sure! Praised your dancing, I can tell you, Mr. Aylesmere. Well, now, isn't this strange? If ever I heerd the like on't! Anyhow, all this while Mr. Aylesmere can't give you a hand for bags and baggage he's crowded with. Let me take some on 'em, Mr. Francis. Here, John Oh! he's gone about the big things."

"I'll take the coats and bags in, papa," said Juliana, now recovering her serenity. "There, perhaps I may as well get out of the carriage while you arrange them neatly inside." And with the most natural air in the world she signed that Frank should offer his arm, with which support—how readily tendered need not be told—she lightly descended from the steps of the carriage and stood by his side.

John now drawing near with inquiring mien, Frank explained to him that all the registered luggage would be found in charge of a railway porter, to which Mr. Leadstone, after he had himself set matters straight within the carriage, added that John had better bring on the said luggage in a cab; "for,"

addressing Juliana, "I'm sure mamma wouldn't relish these sort o' things bein' seen outside her carriage."

When all was in readiness Juliana re-entered the carriage by the aid of the same arm ; the owner of said arm followed, and Mr. Leadstone brought up the rear.

"Holmes," this latter called out, "you're to stop at the 'Otel des Bains (pronounced bang). You know it?"

Oh, yes, Holmes knew it well enough, respectfully touching his hat to "master." He might have added that he had "friends" whose "people was a stoppin' there," with whom he often compared notes over a pipe and a glass or two, or more, as to the illegibility of his and their respective "sitivations."

"And so, my little girl," Leadstone began, when the carriage was in motion, putting his arm fondly round Juliana's *svelte* elastic form, "Mr. Aylesmere turns out to be an old acquaintance of yours—and mamma's too, eh?"

Juliana laughed and blushed. Frank laughed, and looked a little conscious.

"And all along," the Squire continued, "I thought I was bringin' 'im in as what they call in the shops the last new thing of the season;" which sorry and simple attempt at a joke the perpetrator followed up by a torrent of laughter that fairly and irresistibly bore away with him both Juliana and Frank.

"Thank you, Mr. Leadstone." Frank was the first to say, "I shan't forget the figure of speech ; but please to make it complete, and set me up as the dummy showing off the novelty, whatever it's to be. Will you name your female article, Miss Leadstone?"

"Indeed, Mr. Aylesmere, I'll be no party to supposing you anything so dreadful as you suggest. I'll leave the whole thing on papa's shoulders."

"Better and better!" cried Leadstone. "Juliana's a wag. Puts me in place of the dummy! But now listen to me, both of you! I've got an idea; only first give me time to fetch my wind."

Then, after a pause of some moments, "Oh, such a funny idea! Ha! ha! ha! Excuse me, Mr. Aylesmere; it isn't every day I get an out-and-out jolly laugh. What between business and Mrs. Lead——"

"Papa!" interrupted Juliana, with a pretty contraction of her softly-arched eyebrows, while she warningly held up one finger.

"Ah, dear! I understand. No tales out of school. All right! all right! Mum's the word. Well, you shall 'ave my idea presently." And hot through his cachinnatory effort, he fanned himself with his travelling cap, closing his eyes the while.

"I'm quite delighted to see papa so happy, Mr. Aylesmere," said Juliana. "You seem to have put him in wonderfully good spirits."

Frank muttered something about the happiness to Mr. Leadstone inseparable from the meeting with one he loved so well as herself; and then, in a still lower tone, diverged to that other happiness of seeing her which had so unexpectedly fallen to his own lot.

Juliana looked down, and in a voice scarcely above a whisper said, "I can assure you I am very glad we have met again. You see, I did not even know your name."

"Nor I your's, beyond that it was Juliana."

"Ah! you knew that much?"

"I learnt it from the Vicomte."

Here Juliana, perceiving that Mr. Leadstone had opened his eyes, said aloud, "Papa tells me you are coming to dine with us to-day. You'll meet your friend Monsieur de Foix."

"Ah! Does he know the Viscount? I always put the title into English."

"Yes, papa, it was the Vicomte who introduced Mr. Aylesmere to us."

"Although," Frank said, laughingly, "he did not himself know who I was. Just his easy ways!"

"Well, Mr. Aylesmere, Mrs. Leadstone and Juliana are much indebted to his easy ways, as they procured them your agreeable acquaintance. But now for my idea—it's this. I've a fancy to play off a joke on Mrs. Leadstone."

Juliana ventured to suggest that her mamma was not at all times fond of jokes.

"Ah! but she'll relish this one, dear."

"Do you think so, papa? Tell us what it is."

"It is for me to say to her that I've met Mr. Aylesmere,

and how he has kindly accepted my invitation in her name to join her dinner party—mind you *her's*. No cause to say I 'ad—had asked Mr. Aylesmere afore I knew about the party she'd made up." Here the speaker stopped short, once more carried away by his sense of the comic element permeating his idea.

Juliana and Frank looked inquiringly at each other, unable to see anything comic whatever, excepting Mr. Leadstone's fun-distorted countenance.

"You're both very slow," the Squire of Lentworth presently resumed, "not to make out what I'm comin' to—why this, to be sure. To make mamma believe Mr. Aylesmere is a stranger to her—I mean not one and the same as the Viscount introduced to her and you. My stars! won't she stare, when she's makin' up for 'one o' they grand sweepin' curtsies she keeps for new folks, or very big folks, to find it's an old acquaintance that's dropped in on her."

"But, Mr. Leadstone," interposed Frank, "I can hardly call myself an acquaintance of Mrs. Leadstone. I have only had the pleasure of seeing her once. Indeed, it's quite possible I might be introduced to her as Francis Aylesmere, and she not identify me with the person introduced by the Vicomte de Foix."

"Oh, mamma will recognise you readily enough," said Juliana, meaningly; "but I must confess, papa, I don't quite like your idea."

"Oh! if you object to it, dearest——"

"I won't go that length—only it's not the sort of thing I should venture upon myself."

"You're one, child, and I'm another, so if Mr. Aylesmere has no objection to my little joke, I'll please my fancy and play it off."

"The joke seems harmless enough," Frank said; "I'm not supposed to be aware of what you are going to say to Mrs. Leadstone about me."

"Well, but how shall you meet her when you arrive at the house?"

"Quite naturally. Monsieur de Foix introduced me to her at the *etablissement*—you asked me to dine."

"Your part's easy enough; but there's Juliana—she mustn't .

be supposed to 'ave seen you to-day. Not a word about our settin' him down."

"I shall not say a word, papa; but understand, the responsibility of your practical joke rests with yourself entirely. If it turns out that mamma does *not* enter into the fun of the thing, you must get me out of the scrape."

At the word "scrape," Leadstone made a wry face, and it is quite possible that in Juliana's hesitation, he saw a warning against carrying out the puerile and purposeless "idea" that had seized his brain; but he was now unable to recede. Not only did he feel ashamed to let Frank imagine him afraid of his wife (which in minor matters he was mortally!), but the conversation had brought them to the door of the Hôtel des Bains, before which Holmes now pulled up his finely mouthed greys, with a sharp London jerk.

"Ah, mon Dieu! La voiture Leston!"

With this exclamation, the Vicomte, who happened to be standing within the *porte cochère* of the hotel, advanced, flourishing his straw hat in one hand, and extending the other to Mr. Leadstone.

"Et Madame?" he asked, for the portly person of "Monsieur Leston," who sat nearest to him, entirely filled the window.

"Not with us, Viscount—but my daughter is—ay, and a friend of yours as well. Now, Mr. Aylesmere, we must open the door for ourselves. What! gone already!"

During Leadstone's parley with the Vicomte, Frank had let himself out of the carriage at the opposite door, had bidden farewell to Juliana with a friendly pressure of the hand, which, with innocent frankness, she offered him, and had passed behind the carriage to the hotel door.

"Good-bye, Mr. Leadstone," he said; "thanks for the lift."

"Don't mention it! Quite welcome. See you again at 'alf-past seven. Suppose you two'll come up together; eh, Viscount?"

Hereupon De Foix turned to ascertain who was the individual thus associated with himself. Being short-sighted he did not at first recognise Frank, upon whom he could only cast a momentary glance, as the carriage was moving away, which necessitated a succession of his national bows and hat-sweep--

ings in the direction of its departing occupants. In the meantime, Frank had gone to the bureau of the hotel to arrange for his instalment, &c. De Foix after looking vainly in various directions for the person alluded to in connection with himself by "ce bon vieux Leston," retired to the smoking-room, took a newspaper, lighted a cigar, and ensconced himself in an arm-chair. Here he was found by Frank Aylesmere, half an hour afterwards, discussing the coming "Leger" with a couple of stray sons of Albion.

Frank nodded to him, and took a seat, waiting to address him till a break should occur in the conversation.

"Mais Sapristi!" the Vicomte cried suddenly, looking at Frank through his glass; "I surely have the honour to know Monsieur. Have we not met somewhere—Paris or——"

"Here, Vicomte—ten days ago. Happy to see you again.—I've just returned from Paris. Don't you remember?"

"Ah Diable! C'est toi!" rushing over to Frank, and shaking both his hands with the warmth and animation of a life-long friendship. "Now all return to my memory. It was you I promised to say the name of ces dames—mère et fille. They also, I must tell you, after your depart, asked me with a certain anxiety for your name. I could no more inform them than I can now. As for them, they call themselves Leston—Leston, do you hear?"

"I hear—but pardon me, Vicomte, you call them Leston. They call themselves, and are called by the world in general, Leadstone."

"Ah! mais ce n'est pas mal tourné.—You correct me spirituellement. And so you learn their name elsewhere?"

"I have known it many—very many years."

"What you mean?" the Vicomte asked, remarking the serious tone in which Frank said this.

"I mean that Mr. Leadstone's connection with my family began even before my birth. As for the ladies, they were strangers to me till you introduced us, by mere chance, at that ball."

"Ventrebleu! A curious coincidence!"

"I understand, Vicomte, you dine at the Château R. to-day. So do I. Did you not hear Mr. Leadstone, after putting

me down here, remark that he supposed you and I should come together?"

"Ah! now I remember; I looked to see of whom he spoke, but found nobody. Then you came from the gare in his carriage?"

"Yes; Mr. Leadstone and I travelled together from Paris. Are you for a turn on the pier before dressing for dinner?"

"Je suis à toi—Allons."

"Do you think you can remember my name if I tell it to you?"

"I promise you I do my best. What is it—not Smitte—Smisse, eh?"

"According to you, the odds are not heavy against its being Smith—anyhow, it's not Smith—it's Aylesmere—Francis Aylesmere."

"Dix mille diables! You must write that down for me."

"He'll never be able to pronounce it," thought Frank, as he went in search of his hat.

"C'est un charmant garçon." Thus ran the Vicomte's thoughts in the curiously hybrid form incidental to his speech. "Tout de même, it would much facilitate our relations if his name were Smitte—Smisse!"

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. LEADSTONE chuckled over his "idea" when he marked the satisfied countenance with which his wife received the intelligence that young Aylesmere was to join *her* dinner-party.

Juliana, anxious to avoid meeting her mother till dinner-time, went directly from the carriage to her own room. She feared lest her control over her feelings might not prove equal to the occasion, if the subject of the coming guest were to arise; but she also desired to think over, by herself, all that had occurred in connection with that guest.

She had remained thus alone with her thoughts for nearly three quarters of an hour, when a knock at her door, which she recognised as that of Gibson, her own particular and private lady's-maid, reminded her of the arrival of "dressing-time."

Charlotte Gibson was of Middleshire—nay, Lentworth extraction, and was not an every-day or vulgar-minded servant. Her father, now dead, had been a tenant-farmer under Frank Aylesmere's grandfather and father; she had, in her secret soul, a good deal of the old English faith in the ancient lords of the soil. She loved Juliana as every one brought into contact with so sweet and noble a creature must love her. She liked "master" for his geniality and generosity, though her veneration was not profound for one whose genealogy was on a par with her own, and in whose grammar she was able to detect frequent flaws. She feared "missus" no less than she disliked her. At the same time she viewed them all three—to a certain extent—as being in possession of lands to which their right was somewhat questionable.

This being known to Juliana, she felt that in Gibson she would find a sympathetic recipient of the intelligence she had to communicate. The usual points as to, what dress, what ornaments, hair how to be worn? and so on, having been discussed and settled, Juliana opened the subject uppermost in her mind with, "Gibson, I suppose Suttrel"—this person combined the double functions of housekeeper and own maid to "missus"—"has told you we shall be eight, instead of seven, at dinner?"

"No, miss," was the reply. "I haven't seen Mrs. Suttrel the last two hours. Edward took me a walk, please Miss, to the Cemetery, to see the roses that's still a bloomin' there, and most beautiful to be sure they are! And when we got back tea was done, and Mrs. Suttrel was away after her dessert. P'raps master have brought another French nobleman from Paris to parleyvoo with the Viscount?"

"Papa has brought somebody from Paris, Gibson, but not a French nobleman; quite the reverse—an English gentleman—one I've told you about before. Still more remarkable, one you must have known—indeed, I've heard you talk of him—before you knew me."

"La, miss! how you do go runnin' on! and how flushed you are lookin', miss!"

Gibson, be it observed, had the advantage of seeing Juliana's face in the looking-glass, as she stood behind her manipulating her long (and unbought) dark auburn hair.

"Flushed! So I am—and no wonder. Just drop the hair a minute, and listen to me!"

Gibson obeyed, and Juliana, facing her, continued, "Papa has brought from Paris, to dine here, the very same gentleman who danced with me at that ball!"

"I remember that ball, miss but——"

"Stop! stop! And the gentleman who danced with me at the ball turns out to be—the brother of the former owner of Lentworth!"

"What, Mr. Francis Aylesmere?"

"Positively Mr. Francis Aylesmere."

"Lord ha' mercy on us! You don't mean it, miss?"

"It's quite true, Gibson."

"And pray, miss, how might you have found all this out? Did master go and hear all about you and the ball from Mr. Francis himself?"

Juliana, not taking into account Gibson's natural curiosity, had decided to pass by all these details, but finding herself brought to bay by the handmaiden's blunt question, she related the facts exactly as they had occurred.

"It's all for the world like the story-books, miss," was Gibson's comment, as Juliana, her little narrative concluded, turned once more to the looking-glass. "Deary me! how I should like to see Mr. Francis! Do you know, miss, I can tell you his age to a month by my own. I was twenty-six last birthday, though I'm thought more, through looking old-fashioned, and brought up along o' old folks—grandfather and grandmother. I've heerd from Mrs. Binks—She was the gardener's wife—I mean the gardener as looked arter the place—sort of under-bailiff—time of the young squire, Mr. Francis's brother, you know. Well, Mrs. Binks was for everlastin' a-talkin' about Madame Aylesmere—the Squire's and Mr. Francis's mother, I mean—and she told me I was five years and ten months younger than the Squire, and two years all but a week younger than Mr.

Francis. So you see, miss, that makes him out twenty-eight last birthday."

"Quite right, Gibson, though you must admit you've been a long while in coming to it," said Juliana, who, doubtless, but for the pleasantness of the theme, would have commented earlier on the prolixity of the speaker. "As for your being able to see Mr. Francis," she proceeded, "the first thing you have to do is to get on with my hair and the rest of it, the next to look out for the arrival of the Vicomte de Foix, as they are coming together."

"Oh, thank you, miss, for telling me. I'll ask Edward to put me somewhere, for see Mr. Francis I'm determined I will."

It happened that this day's second post had brought Mrs. Leadstone a letter from her dear Dowager, wherein the writer reminded her that there scarcely remained three weeks to Doncaster races, and urged her to "lose as little time as possible in getting the course clear for my nephew Claude." This letter, taken in conjunction with Mr. Leadstone's threat of a four days' stay at the Château R., as also with the very cool reception accorded by Juliana to some carefully premeditated, but affectedly casual allusion to Claude Cotherstone, had jarred not a little upon the lady's already irritated nerves, and had—not to mince terms—completely upset her temper. She had, however, been to some extent soothed by the prospect of making the acquaintance of young Aylesmere, concerning whom she knew nothing, except that he came of an old country stock, and had held some post in one of the more aristocratic public offices. She felt that to receive him as mistress of Lentworth Hall would afford her a species of social triumph, so, in spite of the little Cotherstone *contretemps*, she had prepared for the new guest an exceptionally gracious reception.

In no slight trepidation Juliana entered the drawing-room sufficiently late to find assembled there Miss Plaistow, Miles Berrington, and the Rev. Bernard St. Ives, the latter looking as little as possible like an English episcopal clergyman, as much as possible like a priest of the Church of Rome.

Miss Plaistow kissed her cheek with fervour; Miles Berrington-

ton kissed her hand jauntily, in his double capacity of her god-father and of the young old gentleman we know him to have been ; the Priest bowed his head, and seemed inclined to cross himself as if in the presence of an adorable picture of the Madonna. All three, under one guise or another, gave her to understand that she looked—as indeed she did—unusually bright and lovely.

Mr. Leadstone, after proudly eyeing her from a distance, came up to her, and said in a low voice, "What fun we're going to have!"

"Pray, Papa, dear, don't look too pleased," she returned, in a whisper, "or you'll attract observation!" Then she sat down on a sofa by the side of Miss Plaistow, and fell into conversation with that spinster on some ordinary topic.

In the meantime Mr. Leadstone moved between one and the other of the three guests already arrived, addressing them by turns, while he now rubbed his hands with undisguised glee, and now made violent efforts to restrain his laughter.

To Miles Berrington it was, "I say, Miles! keep your weather eye up ; I've got a jolly surprise in store for you!"

To the Rev. Bernard, "You're goin' to see a person bearin' one of the oldest names in our parish books!"

To Miss Plaistow, "You're come to meet the son of one of your oldest friends—Hush! not a word to Mrs. L——!"

Mrs. Leadstone remarked her husband's radiant countenance and elated air, which she naturally set down to his satisfaction at meeting people from his beloved Middleshire.

At the sound of wheels without—for the Château was provided with outer gates and a carriage drive—followed by the ring of the door-bell, Mr. Leadstone, doing his best to look unconscious, stole to one of the windows ; Juliana, still on the sofa, hiding her face from her mother with her bouquet, made a similar effort.

The first surprise arising out of Frank's appearance was not for the drawing-room. Mr. Leadstone had purposely left Phibbs, the butler, formerly Colonel Briarley's servant, unprepared for the event. At a glance, recognizing the new comer, and oblivious of what was due to his domestic status, Phibbs advanced between Edward and John, and to their utter consternation, seized upon Frank's overcoat and hat, exclaiming,

as he did so, "Why, Mr. Francis, if it isn't you!—Well, sir, this *is* astonishin'! Master only told me some 'un was a comin' out o' Middleshire."

"*Out of Middleshire* I regret to say I am, Phibbs, and shall be for evermore," Frank whispered, then added in a louder tone, "Glad to see you in such good quarters—we'll talk about the Colonel by and by."

"Thank ye, Mr. Francis."

"Now, Vicomte," said Frank, observing that his companion was waiting at the foot of the stairs, "I'm at your service, I beg your pardon for delaying you."

"*Pas de quoi, mon cher*—you are evidently en pays connu here. In fact, I lose myself in wonder to see you know everybody much better than I do—*Ecoutez donc!*"—in a confidential tone, as they followed Phibbs upstairs—"Ce Monsieur là will be a most useful acquaintance. He indicate to us the best wines—and also tell us where we can smoke so as not to incommode the ladies."

"I'll ask him for you, Vicomte, but no smoking for me in this house."

"Allons donc! You no smoke? Mais qu'est ce que cela veut dire donc?"

Impossible for the Vicomte to obtain an answer to his question, even if Frank had been disposed to give him one, for already the drawing-room door was thrown open, and Frank, standing aside, indicated to him that he should enter first.

When a Frenchman has lived much among English, and desires to imitate their ways, it is to be observed that his greetings become of a composite order, a blending of his national bowings and flourishings with le shake-hands Anglais. By this rather prolonged process the Vicomte kept the lady of the house occupied, while Mr. Leadstone eagerly pounced upon Frank and led him triumphantly to the centre of the room, when the young gentleman became at once, in poetic parlance, "the cynosure of neighbouring eyes."

"Hullo, Leadstone! This is your great surprise, eh?" exclaimed Miles Berrington. "Frank Aylesmere, by Jingo! My dear Frank, I'm sincerely glad to see you."

This was followed up by Miss Plaistow, in an aside to Mrs..

Leadstone, "Why he's Juliana's partner at the ball. I told you I felt assured I had seen him before!"

"So then *he* is Mr. Aylesmere," Mrs. Leadstone responded, and instantly her glance caught her daughter's countenance.

Poor Juliana! She marked that quick glance, felt absolutely criminal beneath it, and by her blushes and uneasy air at once betrayed her participation in what her vigilant mother perceived to be some sort of mystification practised upon herself.

Tom Leadstone, dull of perception in the minor matters of every-day life, was yet tolerably wide-awake concerning his wife's ways, and by the time he had brought Frank up to that lady he dimly perceived that—in his own language—he had made a bad hit. Not that Mrs. Leadstone's countenance betrayed the least shadow of displeasure, or that her manner exhibited any coldness; on the contrary, she was all suavity, graciousness, and well-assumed fine-ladyism, but from her black eyes there shone forth an expression of quiet mockery, scarcely perceptible to the ordinary observer, which Leadstone knew always meant mischief present or to come.

Frank Aylesmere, who was unacquainted with the lady and her characteristics, and whose thoughts were upon another and younger lady sitting on the opposite side of the room, was quite satisfied with the reception she accorded him, spoke of the ball as if he had on that occasion been introduced to her in due form, expressed his satisfaction at having met Mr. Leadstone, and then, with the ease of manner natural to him, passed on to Juliana and Miss Plaistow. His greeting to Juliana was so entirely without either embarrassment or excessive affectation of formality as to deceive Mrs. Leadstone, and to make her say internally, "If there be mystification, *he* at least is no party to it!"

Miss Plaistow at once addressed him with, "Why, Mr. Aylesmere, where's your memory? Is it possible that you should have spoken to me at the *Etablissement* that night without recognising your mother's old friend? To be sure I can't boast; for although your features seemed familiar to me, I could not make you out."

"Miss Plaistow! Were you at the ball with Mrs. and Miss Leadstone? Really I do take shame to myself, the more so

that positively you're not a bit changed since——. Well never mind how many years ago it is. As for me, I was a boy then. Now look here!" and he pointed to his beard.

"Oh, yes; bearded like the pard. You used to be a great reader of Shakespeare. Do you ever read him now?"

To this question, put without the slightest purpose—probably indeed to show the querist's learning, for Miss Plaistow had long since ceased to hear of Frank and his doings—he gave a reply which, without being absolutely evasive of, was strongly allusive to, the truth. "I believe, Miss Plaistow," he said, "for one of Shakespeare's great parts which I knew tolerably well in my poor mother's life-time I now have half-a-dozen by heart."

All further discourse on this or any other theme was cut short by the announcement that dinner had been served.

As there were five gentlemen to three ladies, Frank did not aspire to female companionship between *salon* and *salle-d-manger*, much less dream of handing out the daughter of the house. He was therefore not disappointed when Mrs. Leadstone said to him, "Sorry we've no lady for you, Mr. Aylesmere—you and Mr. St. Ives must bring up the rear."

Juliana had been assigned to the Vicomte; now the Vicomte possessed, in all matters where women were concerned, the delicate perception of a woman or a Jesuit father. Led on by a sort of instinct, he had, ever since his arrival, alternately watched Juliana and Frank. By the time he was told off to conduct the charmante Demoiselle to the dinner-table, he had arrived at a conclusion which was thus communicated by himself to himself, "*Gentille petite, je lis dans ton cœur, et ton secret m'est connu.—François, mon bon, tu es un heureux coquin!*"

It is not surprising then, that the good natured fellow should have so contrived matters—Mrs. Leadstone's table arrangements notwithstanding—as to place Frank on one side of Juliana, while he sat on the other. Mrs. Leadstone bit her lips, but of course, said nothing to anybody except herself; her thought was, "since they *have* come together, I'll take the opportunity to watch them!"

Juliana, pleased as she was at the result of the Vicomte's manœuvres (which she shrewdly suspected, and for which she

was duly grateful), felt that her mother's eye would be upon her, throughout the meal, with more than ordinary watchfulness, and resolved to act accordingly.

The deepest hypocrisy she practised, however, consisted in looking more frequently into her plate than into the countenance of the person speaking to her as often as that person happened to be Mr. Francis Aylesmere, and in keeping such a control over her features that they did not display more than half the satisfaction she really experienced at that young gentleman's propinquity.

Had Mr. Francis Aylesmere been equally aware of the necessity for observing caution, he would no doubt equally have observed it. He, however, allowed evidences of his admiration of his lovely neighbour to escape him too unmistakable in character to leave Mrs. Leadstone, or indeed anybody at the table, in doubt on that subject.

Mrs. Leadstone so cunningly demeaned herself during dinner that honest Tom began to think he had, after all, not made such a very bad hit. Had he possessed Juliana's key to the situation—that key being her settled conviction of the nature of her mother's views concerning Claude Cotherstone—he would no more have allowed himself to be momentarily thrown off his guard than was Juliana.

The ladies having (after the Britannic fashion much approved of by the Vicomte, on the ground of its undeniable merits, and not only because it was Britannic) left the gentlemen to their wine and their masculine conversation, and established themselves in their own domain, the drawing-room, Miss Plaistow at once opened on her admiration of "that agreeable and gentlemanly young Frank Aylesmere."

Mrs. Leadstone, freely and with well feigned graciousness, followed suit. He was undoubtedly very agreeable, very gentlemanly, very intelligent and so forth. Ahem! What—here she turned suddenly on Juliana—did her darling think of him?

Her "darling," keenly alive to every movement of her mother's countenance, was not taken unawares. Sheltering herself under a word that in our day has acquired a remarkable elasticity, she replied. "I think him very nice, mamma."

"Nice!" exclaimed Mrs. Leadstone. "Nice! What is the English language coming to? Good gracious, Miss Plaistow, a young bearded man, some thirty years of age, described as 'nice!'"

"Nice!" Thus Miss Plaistow, "Yes, my dear Mrs. Leadstone, when you and I were at school, it was chiefly plum cake and raspberry jam that we described as *nice*."

"Look out 'nice,'" Mrs. Leadstone resumed, "in Johnson and others, you'll find some such meanings as accurate, scrupulous, delicate."

"A fortunate diversion! how thankful I ought to be to Johnson and others!" thought Juliana, as she hastily rose, and went to the piano, exclaiming, "mamma, I must play Miss Plaistow that lovely new piece of Schumann that papa brought me from Paris!"

And then she hastened, by a succession of preluding harmonies, to put an end to all further mention of Mr. Frank Aylesmere and his qualities.

When Mr. Leadstone, in continued pursuance of his Britannic practices, proceeded to take possession of his wife's vacated chair, Miles Barrington also abandoned his chair for one unoccupied next to Frank.

"Well, Frank," he began, "what do you think of my god-daughter?"

"That you have every reason to be proud of her, Mr. Berrington."

"I have indeed, and also to—Ahem!—regret that my son Lumley is such an old young fellow as not to appreciate the advantages of the married state. But that's neither here nor there. A glorious creature Juliana is truly! I fancy she has improved every time I see her. In fact she's almost too charming for the prodigious heiress she's likely to be."

"Ah! Mr. Berrington, that's the only fault I find in her."

"I find one still greater, Frank"—this *sotto voce*—"which is that she's her mother's daughter. Ah! Her mother! *Femme terrible*, as they say in this country. You seem astonished."

"Why, really, you spoke so very seriously that I naturally began to compare notes with the results of my own observations."

"That I can quite understand. There's not a pleasanter woman breathing—when it suits her book to be so."

"Then I suppose it suits her book to be pleasant with me, as I'm sure she has been to-night."

"I saw it, Frank, and I only hope she's sincere."

Frank hoped so, too, but being at the moment asked by the host to help himself, and pass the Château Margaux, he had no opportunity of expressing such hope.

A general conversation ensued. Coffee and liqueurs were brought in, and when the post-prandial symposium had extended to half-an-hour, the gentlemen joined the ladies.

Miss Plaistow, on the look out for the son of her old friend, signed to him the moment he entered to come and sit by her.

"So, Mr. Aylesmere—or I suppose I may say Frank"—she began, glancing at Juliana, who was conversing with the Vicomte, "you've come in for a romantic adventure."

"I certainly little dreamed," Frank answered, "when the Vicomte introduced me, with whom I was about to dance."

"Perhaps if you had heard the name beforehand you might have declined the honour—Painful associations, and all that sort of thing."

"Indeed not, when I had once seen my intended partner."

"She's a lovely girl, and as good as she's lovely. It seems to me that if I were a man she's just the sort of girl I should fall in love with at first sight." Here the spinster affected to hide a very peculiar smile behind her fan. Of course, Frank saw one end of the smile, and of course he understood it.

"You know the French proverb—*On ne badine pas avec l'amour*," he said, gravely.

"I do. Pray, how do you apply it here?"

"Thus—it would be impossible to love Miss Leadstone and not love her very seriously."

"A decided opinion to give of a girl you never knew till you danced with her something like a fortnight ago. But probably you've thought a good deal about her since that ball. If you have"—lowering her voice—"you may safely confess it to your mother's old friend."

"Admitting that I have, Miss Plaistow, what then? For I

had no idea she I was thinking of was the heiress of Lentworth. Ah! what a chasm between her and——”

“The dispossessed of Lentworth,” she hastily put in.

“Good that for romance writers,” Frank observed, with an incredulous smile, “but it won’t do for real life.”

“Don’t be too sure of that, Frank. Anyhow this subject is one we may as well drop for the present—I can see we are observed in a certain quarter.”

Frank looked towards Juliana and perceived that her eyes were fixed upon them.

“Not that quarter! Don’t look round! You must be made to understand the situation. Come and see me to-morrow and I’ll give you some useful hints. I live at No. —, Rue Prince Albert.”

Frank was a little mystified, but he began to draw from the obscure hints thrown out, both by Miss Plaistow and Miles Berrington, the lesson that, while he ought not to be particular in his attentions to Juliana, he should lose no opportunity of making himself agreeable to Juliana’s mother, and it was on this principle that he acted till the party broke up.

The degree of success which crowned his efforts in the latter pursuit may be inferred from the parting words which Mrs. Leadstone addressed respectively to him and to herself. They were as follows :—

To him, “If you will call here to-morrow, say between twelve and one, Mr. Aylesmere, I’ll show you those photographic views of the new Lentworth house and the deer park.

To herself, “And find out from you, if I can, how soon you mean to *leave* Boulogne!”

Frank could have no possible participation in her unspoken thoughts, but it certainly did occur to him that Juliana had casually related to him, during dinner, how she very frequently—indeed, almost daily—walked, with her maid, on one of the piers; how she preferred the Western, or Capécure pier, on account of its being less frequented than the Eastern pier, and how sometimes it would be in the morning, sometimes in the afternoon; but if in the morning, invariably between twelve and one!

(*To be continued.*)



“VERITIES OF INDIA.”

IN India English people live in luxury and ease,
They roll in wealth of jewels and unlimited rupees.
All day beneath the punkah's swing they lie in soft repose,
And sip their “brandy pawnee” when they wake up from a
doze ;

Until the blazing tropic sun has hied him to his rest,
And sunk in purple splendour beneath the fiery west ;
And then they issue forth into the sweet and balmy air,
Reclining on the cushions of their carriages and pair ;
Or else they ride on elephants with trappings rich and rare,
The odour of sweet perfumes inhaling everywhere.
Of dusky, turbaned servants they possess a mighty throng—
They've one to take their stockings off, and one to put them
on.

They keep a man to oil their hair, or two if they are wise,
And three to stand behind the chair to brush away the flies ;
And everything they eat is *hot*, and everything is *nice*,
Especially they mostly live on curry mixed with rice.
In India every English girl gets married in a week :
A single maid is hard to find, however far you seek,
No matter whom they marry, for each man, alive or dead,
Is worth five hundred pounds per year, and widows can re-
wed.

In fact if there be Paradise on earth 'tis surely this—
I only wish you all could taste a portion of its bliss.
One thing, however, I should say—I almost had forgot—
That India most undoubtedly is often rather *hot*.
In fact, not even down below, I think that there is not a
Burning fiery furnace which in temperature is *hotter*.

The proof of this very plain, a story I can tell,
To show to you that Hindostan is warmer much than—well—
’Tis more polite to call the place by classic name of “*Hades*,”
In order not to shock the taste of sensitive fine ladies.
Once on a time, at BlazEEPore, a friend of mine deceased—
He’d been a very wicked man, no saint to say the least—
Had you but known him I am sure you’d say he was a sinner
Of deepest dye, and never could of *heaven* be a winner.
Well, two days after he had died (we’d placed him in the
ground)
Upon the table where I write a little note I found
Which smelt of brimstone so that I could hardly stand the
smell.
’Twas written in the writing of my friend poor Colonel L——.
The note ran thus—it only was a line or two, no more—
“ Please send me down two *blankets*, for after BlazEEPore,
I find it rather *cold* down here ; adieu, and *au revoir* !”

G. W. MACGEORGE.





POPE AT TWICKENHAM.

NOT until after his good and wise old friend, Sir William Trumball, had warned him that the life he was leading was likely to injure his health, that Pope gave up London society and retreated to his residence at Twickenham, or "Twitenham"—as he loved to write it. "Get out of all tavern company, and fly away, *tanquam ex incendio*," said Sir William, and Pope was prudent enough to obey; but not without a sigh, and a looking-back to his old haunts, as a letter from the poet to his friend Jervas testifies, wherein he writes—"I cannot express how I long to renew our old intercourse and conversation, our morning conferences in bed in the same room, our evening walks in the park, our amusing voyages on the water, our philosophical suppers, our lectures, our dissertations, our gravities, our fooleries, or what not."

Pope took his father and mother with him to Twickenham. His father died there the year after Pope had possession of the property; but his mother lived on till the year 1733, dying at the good old age of ninety-three. "You are the most dutiful son I have ever known," writes Swift to his friend, on the death of his mother; and Pope says of himself that he never cost his parents "a tear," as they had never cost him "a blush."

Pope came from Binfield, near Wokingham, to Twickenham. The former had been the residence of his father, Alexander Pope, who had made for himself an independence as a linen-draper in the Strand, where probably the poet was born. The father first went to Kensington on his retiring from business, and thence to Binfield. These were the only two constant residences of the poet, for in London he was only a visitor, or, at most, a lodger. He lived at Binfield till he was twenty-eight years of age; and for exactly the remaining half

of his existence he had Twickenham for his home, dying there in the year 1744 at the age of fifty-six.

It must, indeed, have been time for the poet to have sought the sylvan shades of retirement after the life he had been leading in the midst of "wine, wit, and conversation" in London, kept flowing to all hours, and with such sprites as Jervas, Parnell, Garth, Rowe, and others of like geniality for his companions. These, and such as these, were the frequenters of the "coffee-houses" of the day, and who were to be found in turns at "Wills'," "Button's," the "Kit-cat," and other places where men of genius assembled.

But our purpose is to follow Pope to the quietude of this new abode at Twickenham. It is a matter for regret that his famous villa should have been demolished. In 1802 the property was sold to Sir John Briscoe, Bart. ; after his death it was again disposed of to the Baroness Howe. This lady and her husband, Sir J. Waller Wathen, levelled the house to the ground. Pope, it is said, was anxious that some of his friends should preserve his house and grounds after his death, but this none of them did. Every distinctive feature of the place is gone—saving only the passage of the once famous grotto, which is now secured with iron gates at both ends.

We all know how Dr. Johnson has ridiculed Pope's grotto, saying, that "he extracted an ornament from an inconvenience," and "that where Nature enforced a passage Vanity produced a grotto." The "inconvenience" was that Pope's grounds lay on both sides of the high road ; and the "passage" which "Nature enforced" was one which connected the grounds together. To have overcome such a drawback to the value of the property by making a tunnel underneath the road was, at least in Pope's days, a novel and ingenious feat ; but the sin, to the surly and too exclusively practical mind of the great doctor, was that of ornamenting the work and calling it a "grotto."

Pope's own description of the place is interesting. He says, "I have put the last hand to my works of this kind in happily finishing the subterranean way and grotto. I found there a spring of the clearest water, which falls in a perpetual rill that echoes through the cavern night and day. From the river Thames you see through my arch, up a walk of the wilder-

ness, to a kind of open temple wholly composed of shells in the rustic manner ; and from that distance under the temple you look down through a sloping arcade of trees and see the sails on the river passing suddenly, and vanishing as through a perspective glass. When you shut the door of this grotto it becomes on the instant from a luminous room a *camera obscura*, on the walls of which all the objects of the river, hills, woods, and boats, are forming a moving picture, in their visible radiations."

Besides this prose description, Pope has left another in verse—

"Thou who shalt stop, where Thames' translucent wave
Shines a broad mirror through the shadowy cave ;
Where lingering drops from mineral roofs distil,
And painted crystals break the sparkling rill ;
Unpolished gems no ray or pride bestow,
And latent metals innocently glow ;
Approach ! great Nature studiously behold,
And eye the mine without a wish for gold.
Approach ; but awful ! lo ! the Egerian grot,
Where, nobly pensive, St. John sat and thought ;
Where British sighs from dying Wyndham stole,
And the bright flame was shot through Marchmont's soul ;
Let such, such only, tread this sacred floor,
Who dare to love their country, and be poor."

But what of the house in general? If it could boast of any classic style at all, it was perhaps of the Roman type, with columns arcades, and porticos, all designed by Pope himself, as may be seen by the poet's own sketches on the backs of letters which are preserved in the British Museum. Pope's own verbal description hardly gives us any definite idea of the building itself, although the attractions it afforded in the summer season are glowingly set forth by him.

"My building," he says, "rises high enough to attract the eye and curiosity of the passenger from the river, where, upon beholding a mixture of beauty and ruin, he inquires what house is falling, or what church is rising? So little taste have our Tritons for Vitruvius, whatever delight the poetical gods of the river may take in reflecting on their streams, my Tuscan porticos, or Ionic pilasters."

Pope was evidently at best but a fickle architect, at least we

are tempted to this conclusion when we find him saying of himself to his friend Lord Bolingbroke, the "nobly pensive" St. John—

"I plant, root-up ; I build and then confound ;
Turn round to square, and square again to round ;
You never change one muscle of your face !
You think this madness but a common case."

There was one virtue, however, attending "this madness," for which the poet may well be commended ; it never got him into debt. Pope doubtless had his fancies and his vanities, but he never indulged them at the expense of his prudence and a disregard to "paying his way" in the world.

Pope's "larger garden" was on the side of the road farthest from the Thames. Here he spent his later days—"planting and replanting, contriving and recontriving, pulling down and building up ;" and here we may picture him in the height of his enjoyment, working with his own hands at his vines, his willows, and his quincunx, occasionally assisted by those of his three select friends—Swift, Bolingbroke, and Gay.

Pope is said to have been the introducer of the weeping willow into England. The story is that seeing some twigs around the wrapping of an article of *vertu* sent to Lady Sylvius from abroad, he planted these, saying they might belong to some kind of tree yet unknown in England. Certain it is that slips from Pope's famous tree were eagerly sought after, and were even transmitted to places abroad. The Empress of Russia, to wit, in the year 1789 obtained some cuttings from Pope's tree for the Imperial Garden at St. Petersburg. Pope's willow died at a good old age in the year 1801, when, spite of props, and every care, it fell and perished, and now the place thereof remembers it no more. Nevertheless it has left a numerous progeny of thriving and graceful children behind, all owing their origin to the careful hand of the poet who so tenderly nurtured the parent stock in the grounds of his little paradise at Twickenham.

To the end of his days Pope seems to have preserved his attachment to his house by the river-side. In 1736, eight years before his death, he speaks of it in a letter to Swift as being "enlarged" as well as his garden. "I have more fruit trees and kitchen-garden than you have any thought of." He

boasts of his melons and pine-apples—says he is “as much better a gardener as he is a worse poet,” is “thankful for every wet day,” and “for every fog” that “gives him the head-ache, but prospers his work.” True, indeed, he is beginning to feel ill-health creeping upon him, but still he takes delight in making his “little improvements” in his garden and house. “My trees will indeed outlive me,” he sighs ; but, nevertheless he is amiable enough to remember that “they will afford fruit and shade to others,” and “it is no sort of grief” to him that those others “will not be things of his own poor body,” but yet “creatures of the same species and made by the same hand.”

Pope was no recluse, he took the greatest pleasure in having his friends about him—and what an array of great names did not these include? “I was the other day recollecting,” says he in a letter to Swift of the year 1736, “twenty-seven great ministers or men of wit and learning who are all dead, and all of my acquaintance within twenty years past.” Some of these were doubtless at times amongst his guests at Twickenham, and more especially his three favourites, Swift, Bolingbroke, and Gay—who entered so heartily into all Pope’s literary plans, and of whom it is recorded that “they read together, wrote together, and joked and feasted together”—nay more, that they worked with him at his grotto and in his garden, helped him to plant, sort spars and stones, and to fix them in the wall. Even Lord Peterborough—the hero of the Spanish campaign, of whom it was said that he had “seen more kings and more postillions than any man in Europe”—did not disdain to lend a helping hand in such trifles, for the poet himself informs us that—

“He whose lightnings pieced the Iberian lines
Now forms my quincunx, and now ranks my vines.”

Sir William Stanhope, who purchased the property at Twickenham at Pope’s death, added two wings to the house, and enlarged the grounds. He also added another grotto, which formed a passage to some further plantations. There was once a bust of Pope at the entrance of this grotto, and also a marble slab, on which the following silly inscription by Clare was written:—

“The humble roof, the garden’s scanty line,
Ill spoke the genius of a bard divine ;

But fancy now displays a fairer scope,
And Stanhope's plans unfold the soul of Pope."

The idea of "Stanhope's plans" unfolding the soul of Pope is at least amusing. The temple of which Pope speaks as being seen from his grotto is gone, and with it also the small obelisk in memory of his mother, bearing these pathetic lines:—

"Ah! Editha
Matrum Optima
Mulierum Amantissima
Vale!"

Dodsley seems to have foretold the end of Pope's grotto in the following lines:—

"Then some small gem, or moss, or shining ore,
Departing each shall pilfer—a fond hope
To please their friends in every distant shore,
Boasting a relic from the cave of Pope."

Perhaps it needed no very great extent of prophetic vision to foresee that such a toy, which must have required constant attention to keep in order, would not long survive the fancy that created it.

If Pope commenced the translation of the *Iliad*, as Johnson affirms, in 1712, and concluded it in 1718, he probably wrote the last third of it at Twickenham. The "*Dunciad*," we know, was published in 1728, and the "*Essay on Man*" in 1733. Both of these, therefore, must have been written at Twickenham. No sooner was the "*Dunciad*" before the world than its author began to find that there were thorns even amongst the roses of Twickenham. His paradise for a time became his prison also, and the "little venomous poet," who, according to Johnson, "hardly drank tea without a stratagem," was made himself to smart. Lady Mary Montagu and Lord Hervey, his former friends and now enemies, were determined to have their revenge upon him for all the wounds he had so wantonly inflicted upon them, and so they hit upon an expedient for torturing Pope to the very quick. They issued a pamphlet, the nature of which may perhaps be imagined from its title, which was as follows:—

"A Pop upon Pope; or, A True and Faithful Account of a late horrid and barbarous whipping committed on the body of Sawney Pope, poet, as he was innocently walking in Ham

walks, near the river Thames, meditating verses for the good of the public. Supposed to have been done by two evil disposed persons out of spite and revenge for a harmless lampoon which the said poet had writ upon them."

Pope writhed under this petty squib, and so keenly did he feel himself injured that he actually thought it necessary to insert a denial of the whole affair in the *Daily Post*, of June 14th, 1728, as follows:—

"Whereas there has been a scandalous paper cried aloud about the streets under the title of 'A Pop upon Pope,' insinuating that I was whipped in Ham walk on Thursday last; this is to give notice that I did not stir out of my house at Twickenham on that day, and the same is a malicious and ill-grounded report."—A. P.

For some time after this it is said that Pope never ventured to take his walks abroad; except in company with a huge Irishman, and he armed with a stout cudgel.

A curious incident connected with Pope's latter days at Twickenham deserves a passing note. For five years before his death he had been afflicted with asthma, which ended in dropsy. Sitting one day in his garden in company with his two friends Lord Bolingbroke and Lord Marchmont, he sees at the bottom of the terrace his favourite Martha Blount, and asks Bolingbroke "to go and hand her up," but my lord liketh not the errand, and so crosses his legs and sits still. But my Lord Marchmont, who was "younger and less captious," goes to fetch the lady. "What," says the heartless one, "is he not dead yet?" It was strange that a woman for whom we know Pope entertained such tender feelings, and who certainly had a warm regard for him, should have neglected him with such unkindness in his decay. And this is the more astonishing, for Johnson tells us that "their acquaintance began early; that the life of each was pictured in the other's mind"; and that "when they met there was an immediate coalition of congenial notions." Spite of her neglect, however, "of the little that Pope had to leave she got the greater part."

But the end is near, and the poet's mind is but a chaos. He complains that he sees things through a curtain, and in false colours, and that his greatest inconvenience is "inability to think." Bolingbroke weeps over his friend's decay, and

leaves on record this estimate of his worth: "I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or more general friendship for mankind." The last known words that Pope uttered were these:—"There is nothing that is meritorious but virtue and friendship, and indeed friendship itself is only a part of virtue."

The remains of Pope were placed beside those of his parents at Twickenham church. Only the letter "P" marks the actual place of his interment; but there is a tablet of grey marble, with a medallion profile of the poet on the wall, erected to his memory by Bishop Warburton, which includes the epitaph Pope had written for himself:—

"Heroes and kings your distance keep;
In peace let one poor poet sleep,
Who never flattered folks like you;
Let Horace blush, and Virgil too."

Nevertheless Pope's remains were not allowed to rest in peace—that is, if the story be true that some years ago his skull was abstracted from his grave, and that it once figured in the private collection of a phrenologist at Highgate. Another skull, it is said, was substituted for that of Pope, and placed in his coffin. The story is unpleasant, and we wish it could be proved to be untrue. Westminster Abbey and proximity to the dusty relics of such "folks" as "heroes and kings," might perchance have saved the poet's remains from so vile an indignity.

ERNEST WILSON, F.S.A.





FIDELITY.

WE certainly *were* over bold,
When, down in that village of Devon,
Our youthful affection we told
At scarcely responsible seven.
I steadily perilled my soul
By vowing we never
Would sever.
And now? Well I think on the whole
I love you as fondly as ever.

It's true you've to beauty no claim
(A fact I'm inclined to make most of,
For my case is somewhat the same—
My beauty is nothing to boast of),
It's true you are wanting in "style,"
It's true that you never
Were clever;
But still, though the cynic may smile,
I love you as fondly as ever.

You've grown sharp and scraggy they say,
They tell me *my* figure is portly;
Your hair, I imagine, is grey—
Well, mine will be vanishing shortly.
But why should these matters appal?
And why should I never
Endeavour
(Through not having loved you at all)
To love you as fondly as ever?

J. W. HOGO-HUNT.



DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 4.

FOR this they talk and obstruct,
Till Sir Stafford grows perfectly blue with it ;
But ranters can rarely construct ;
If they got it—"what could they do with it ?"

I.

Living, denied a crust of bread ;
Honoured and glorified when dead.

II.

In themselves two harmless letters ;
With *one* prefixed, well known to betters.

III.

At sunny Nice I coldly stray,
Over the hills and far away.

IV.

In Cowper's best known ballad I appear
In the first verse : now seek me also here.

BUTTERCUP.

SOLUTION OF DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 3.

M o T
I c I
E tr E
N o N

Correct answers have been received from : Quite a Young Thing too—Brevette—Shark—P.V.—S.P.E.—Numantia—Black Beetle—Two Cockneys—La Belle Alliance—What, Never?—Nursery—Hanky Panky—Charmione—Beolne—Dowager—G.—Artemisia—and Cetywayo ; 18 correct, and 32 incorrect—total 50.

Rumtfoo is credited with Acrostic No. I.

Two Cockneys are credited with Acrostic No. II.



MESOSTICH No. 4.

LIKE the rising of the tide
Rushing in on every side.
Stay! it's only South and East ;
West and North are safe at least.

I.

Snug in her ivy-mantled tower,
She braves both wind, and cold, and shower.

II.

An ugly animal of dubious race,
And yet associated oft with Grace.

III.

Here do we see the irony of fate ;
The second named the whole ; the first—one state.

DICK DEADEYE.

SOLUTION OF MESOSTICH No. 3.

Pa P in
r A t
a R t
r I z
oi S on

Light 3.—“Souvent un beau désordre est un effet de l'art.”
(Boileau).

Correct answers have been received from :—Bear—Shark—
Beolne—La Belle Alliance—What, Never?—Brevette,—
Artemisia—Quite a Young Thing too—Dowager—and Black
Beetle; 10 correct and 51 incorrect—total 61.

ACROSTIC AND MESOSTICH RULES.

I.—Each number of the *St. James's Magazine* will contain a Double Acrostic and a Mesostich.

II.—In *each* competition Three Annual Prizes, in money (1st prize twenty-five guineas, 2nd prize ten guineas, 3rd prize five guineas), will be awarded to the three most successful solvers.

III.—Special competitions will be held for guessing off ties (if any).

IV.—Prize-winners will be required to furnish their names and addresses for publication.

V.—The same solver may win prizes in both competitions.

VI.—Only *one* word can be accepted as the solution of each light.

VII.—Answers addressed to "The Acrostic Editor," 5, Friar Street, Ludgate Hill, E.C., must be posted in time to be received by the first post on the 10th of each month, or on the 11th, if the 10th falls on a Sunday.

VIII.—In accordance with the wishes of numerous Subscribers, the Acrostics and Mesostiches for March, June, September and December will be in French.



St. James's Magazine.

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MAY, 1879.  
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HUBERT MAITLAND'S WRAITH.

A NOVEL.

BY FELIX HOLLAND.

CHAPTER V.



FATHER AND DAUGHTER—AND A CANDIDATE FOR A
CLERKSHIP.

MOST clerkklings would have been a little nervous at finding themselves, for the first time, face to face with the iron-studded door of Curtice House with the prospect of soon being face to face with its mighty owner. But Phillip Celini was a person not easily disconcerted. A moment he stood perplexed on the great stone steps, then he laugehd aloud.

"Visitors! servants! Now I wonder which of these gratuitous instructions is intended for my particular benefit? If I ring 'Visitors' I may offend Aldair and bring down on myself the indignation of the flunkey. I certainly can have nothing to do with 'Servants.' On mature consideration I think I shall try the experiment of a peal of thunder." And thunder he did forthwith.

The tall footman who immediately answered the summons was not a little puzzled as to the precise position in the social strata of the gentlemanly, albeit gloveless and cardless young man who so audaciously awoke the echoes of Curtice House.

"Phillip Celini," said the visitor, slipping quietly into the hall.

"Mosyear Fleep Tshleeny?" interrogated De la Plush, making frantic efforts to look down on the owner of the unpronounceable name.

"Phillip Celini; I have an appointment with Mr. Aldair at eight o' clock."

De la Plush made one final and perilous effort to look over the visitor's head and disappeared.

After another awkward two minutes Phillip found himself face to face with the great man in the sumptuous drawing-room of Curtice House.

"Be seated, sir," said the merchant, "I have sent for Mdlle. Barb."

Philip sat complacently regarding a small vignette on the wall; he did not appear at all impressed by the more striking evidences of wealth, and seemed quite unconscious of the great Aldair's presence. Indeed that gentleman was not a little nettled by what he considered the unbecoming *sang froid* of this young candidate for a clerkship. As he eyed him over his newspaper he caught sight of a beautiful jewel flashing and glittering on the youth's little finger with a most immodest obtrusiveness.

"That is a very valuable ring you wear, young man, show it me," said the merchant, abruptly breaking in on Philip's reverie. Aldair considered good manners only obtained among equals.

Phillip courteously removed it and handed it to him.

"I cannot permit my clerks to wear such things," said the great man, returning it with a curious, surprised glance.

"Indeed! then I will not wear it in the shop."

Aldair frowned. "I hope," he said, "you will soon learn the difference between a vast mercantile establishment and a—a—" The vulgar word "shop" was really too much for the great man, and with a slight shrug of disgust he relapsed into his newspaper.

Presently he looked up sharply.

"Are you aware of the value of that jewel? How came you by it?" he asked in a breath.

"I never thought anything about its value," replied Philip, with imperfectly concealed scorn. "It was given me by my father, and it had been my mother's, and her mother's; I had

a little sister once, had she lived it would have been hers ; so I keep it as the only thing that reminds me of all I have lost."

This touch of sentiment was even more repugnant to Aldair than the audacity which had dared to designate the great Bellhaven Street establishment a shop. Again he shrugged his shoulders, and addressed himself to his newspaper. But finding himself uncomfortable under the scrutiny of the dark eyes which he felt, rather than saw, were watching him, he arose and hastily left the room.

Philip, relieved by his absence, took a promenade round the apartment, examining the various *bric-à-brac*, statuettes, and the paintings and portraits which adorned the walls. But the one small miniature of a lovely girl which had first attracted his attention still engrossed it ; not so much because it was lovely, but because it reminded him of another face he had seen—Where ?

While he was yet revolving this question in his mind he heard a light step and the rustle of a silk dress behind him ; he turned and encountered—the beautiful little student of Dante. He started and blushed a little as he recognised her. The young lady, much more confused, beat a hasty retreat to the door ; then she hesitated, and bestowing on the youth an imploring, half-terrified glance, stammered out a feeble echo of his greeting. In an instant, and so gracefully that he hardly seemed to have moved at all, he was at her side. In his impulsiveness he so far forgot himself as to seize her hand.

"One word," he whispered, as he gazed eagerly into the girl's lovely face, "tell me, you are not—you are not—his daughter ?"

"I really do not understand you, sir," returned the young lady, reverting to her good breeding, and thereby giving a hint to her companion, which, by the way, he most obtusely ignored.

"No matter," he replied, bitterly, glancing from her beautiful face to the portraits of the handsome but harsh-featured merchant which confronted them, and reading in that glance, despite the dissimilarity of the pair, the indubitable evidence of kin. "No matter, Miss Aldair, I merely wished to say how

glad I am to meet you again anywhere and under any circumstances ; for to quote the chapter you were reading when I last had the happiness to meet you—

“Fecemi quale è quei, che disiando
Altro vorria, e sperando s' appaga !”

“And I,” returned the young lady, “I also desired to meet you again, sir ; but hardly hoped it would be in my home.”

Thereupon the girl hung her head and was silent, and Phillip, for perhaps the first time in his life, found himself also dumb. So the pair stood silent sixty seconds, which a tall antique clock in the corner counted out from its iron heart so distinctly and slowly that it seemed an hour ; and all the while Phillip had unconsciously retained the little hand, and the little hand had not shown the slightest desire to escape, except by a certain warm, fluttering, throbbing motion, which it made spasmodically, responsive to a kindred impulse in its owner's bosom. At last a heavy step came tramping along the corridor, and almost before the young lady could withdraw her hand and assume an expression of countenance which, to say truth, looked for all the world as though she was trying to look profoundly composed, the pompous Aldair stood before them.

“Ha ! Miss Aldair,” he exclaimed—the great man never called his children by their Christian names in presence of strangers—“I have been seeking you. Where is Mdle. Barb ?”

“Mdle. Barb, papa, is gone to buy me some music ; can I do anything for you ?”

“*Certamente*,” interposed Phillip, turning to his fair companion, and speaking rapidly in Italian, “I am here in order that your governess may test my knowledge of Italian.”

“What do you mean, sir ? speak when you are spoken to,” growled the outraged merchant.

“I beg your pardon, sir,” replied the candidate, recovering his native assurance. “Is not this the lady who is to test my Italian ?”

“*My daughter, Miss Aldair, sir !*” thundered the great man.

“Don't be angry, papa,” pleaded Miss Aldair, taking her cue from Phillip with all a school girl's vivacious love of mischief. “How should the gentleman know I am not the governess ?”

And," in a whisper, "I am sure I know Italian quite as well as Mdlle. Barb, and my English accent is as good as her French one." Then turning to Phillip, she said, curtly, in Italian, "Thank you very much for helping me out of my difficulty."

"I had no idea till now how precious thanks—even unmerited thanks—might become," the young man answered with a graceful bow.

This vague compliment did not sound half so bad in "*la lingua Toscana*," and Miss Aldair blushed delightedly.

"How does he speak, child? You have heard enough to judge if he is an——" Aldair was about to say impostor, but checked himself, as he caught sight of Phillip's flashing eye; he had divined the unspoken word.

"The young gentleman speaks beautifully, papa, and," in a whisper again, "it is so pleasant to hear an Italian speak, when he is not one's master. May I ask him another question, sir?"

"Certainly, Miss; he is our servant."

"Now, signor ——?"

"I am called Phillip Celini."

"Then, signor Phillip Celini," resumed the innocent, demurely, seating herself, "tell me why are you here; are you going to be one of papa's clerks?"

"That depends on Miss Aldair's report concerning my ability," replied Phillip, smiling.

"Hush," said the young lady. "There is Mdlle. Barb at the door; I must say *addio*." She turned reluctantly to retire, and Phillip, whose passion was now quite master of his discretion, made a step forward, and speaking very rapidly and earnestly continued,

"Oh, do not say *addio*. Believe me I do not forget myself, I am only a poor musician, and I know that no efforts, no talents, if I have them, can bridge over the gulf which separates us. I may never call you friend, nor think of you as such except as all the good are friends of all the unfortunate; but if I may only see your beautiful face sometimes, and silently worship you, as Petrarch his Laura, this dreary London will be my Avignon."

"What are you talking about, sir?" asked Aldair, abruptly

cutting short Phillip's rhapsody, and suspiciously scrutinising his flushed face and kindling eyes.

"I was speaking, sir, of some charming people of Avignon," replied the unabashed young man, and added, with the slightest possible curl of his lips, "what a pity you do not understand Italian, sir."

Miss Aldair placed her finger on her lips warningly.

"Hush! not another word—some other time perhaps—I walk in Kensington gardens, almost every day with Mdlle. Barb or Mr. Moss."

"And may I be so bold as to ask who is Mr. Moss?" said Phillip.

"Oh," said Emily, blushing, "Mr. Moss is—Mr. Moss is—is—*addio*, Signor. Papa, I am going into the garden to see Dick Gadaway's new flowers."

CHAPTER VI.

AN HOUR IN ALDAIR'S GARDEN.

DICK GADAWAY, gardener of Curtice House, and orator of the "Crown and Candle" inn was, as had often been observed, a very singular character. Indeed, an ancient prediction, dating back from the remote period when he lay between his nurse's knees, a little puling, red entity, averred that Dick was destined to a remarkable manhood. And in sooth so it proved. A more remarkable man one seldom meets. From the crown of his head—nay, from some inches above it, where his bristly hair rose piously skyward—to the sole of his feet he was, we repeat, a remarkable man. His very limbs were remarkable, no less by their length and angularity, than by the unheard of positions they contrived to occupy. His body was of a bulbous pear-shape, and looked as if it had originally been long and gaunt, but had been impressed and expanded into notoriety by his preponderant head. Ye gods, what a head! great craggy brows overhanging unexplorable caverns; enormous cheekbones,

lantern jaws, fringed with grizzled brush-like hair, a nose that might have been stolen from the hero of Hyde Park Corner, but for its Bardolphian hue, and its ever apparent susceptibility ; and a mouth so wide that it appeared impossible it could have smiled without seriously incommoding his ears. This latter physiognominal trait somehow reversed the order of nature, and instead of Dick's features being the result of his disposition, I am inclined to think his disposition, which was very grave indeed, may have been attributable to his physiognomy: Nature had left no room for laughter in his face.

Nevertheless, on the whole, Dick was wisely, if not symmetrically constituted. Nature having commenced in her usual way with his head had thereby postulated his enormous feet, or nothing short of the suspension of the laws of gravitation could have prevented him falling hourly on his face, or, more correctly speaking, on his nose.

But stop, we have forgotten Mr. Gadaway's most remarkable feature, his eye. We use the singular advisedly, for he had but one, the second optic being simply a glass bead. This being merely an adventitious ornament, I, for one, am sure Mr. Gadaway would have been the last to take credit for it, notwithstanding it had a trick of staring straightforward into vacuity quite sublime and poetical in its way. But in the other eye the whole soul of the man shone forth like the gleam of a dark lantern in the night. In truth it was a wonderfully bright and intelligent eye, and its glance, so soft and kind, imparted to Dick's preposterous physiognomy an attractiveness that reminded one of Jaques' picture of Adversity, which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in its head.

Unlike most remarkable men, Dick was modest and unassuming. He had nevertheless as correct an appreciation of his mental and spiritual worth, as of his physiognomical and corporeal blemishes. "You see, gentlemen," he would often observe, "I believe with all good Christians in the independent existence of the soul. Gentlemen, I beg most humbly to assert that I have a soul of my own. I would further observe, in order to prevent misconception, that this my individual immortality is no more to be confounded with, or estimated by its temporary vehicle than a king's majesty

is to be known by the mud walls of a hovel in which he shelters during a passing storm."

Born in an unappreciative generation, Mr. Gadaway had long since abandoned all hopes of greatness, if ever he had them, and though possessing a clear head, an amount of information, and a ripe, figurative eloquence that might easily have won for him a high position in Parliament, or a Methodist pulpit, he lived contentedly as head gardener at Curtice House and the genial orator of the "Crown and Candle."

Dick stood at the entrance of the arbour, tenderly pruning away the superfluous and fading blossoms of a great, white-rose tree. He had passed a great part of his life in the garden at the back of Curtice House, and being of a genial, social disposition, he had in default of more appreciative companions, contracted a kind of friendship with this particular white rose tree, and was in the habit of confidentially consulting it concerning things in general, and occasionally the more secret matters appertaining to Curtice House in particular. It is difficult to say how this friendship arose. It may be there was some subtle affinity between the great spreading bush and the old gardener's own shambling person; or the beauty of its flowers, so fragrant and unappreciated, may have won the sympathy of his kind, poetic soul; anyhow, Dick loved it. Had he been called upon he would as soon have relinquished the friendship of Ebenezer Scroggs and his nightly guests, as the mute companionship and sympathy of the white rose.

"So your blossoms are fading again, Miss Rose," said Dick, as at every touch the white petals showered snow-like on the ground, "fading again! and it is nearly fifteen years since I first had the pleasure of your acquaintance. You have been, next to Ebbe Scroggs, the best friend I ever had since I left Otley farm—dear old Otley! I wonder how they get on there now at the 'Greyhound,' and if Hubert Maitland's Wraith has paid them another visit from limbo! Egad, he was in his natural element last time. Poor young master, too—and the boy. He was not a bad sort, Philip Clark; but we shall never see him again—shall we, Rose, and it's fifteen years ago? Oh, Rose, Rose, you were a delicate little

thing then—very much afraid of the cold and frosts. I never thought you'd live to grow up. Dear, how the time flies. I hope you feel as young as ever, miss, if it is not rude to say so, you ladies are so touchy over your ages. What, scratch? well, you need not do that, if you are an old maid. It's no fault of yours; more shame to them that had the bringing you up, not to have found you an eligible partner. Not but that I think you are quite as well as you are; for you had better carry your virginity to the grave than be married as marriages go now. You see, miss, you are a well brought up and well educated lady; and if they found you a husband, depend upon it he would be some nasty, disagreeable fellow, as stupid as yonder cedar of Lebanon, or that Palestine thorn Miss Emily thinks so much of, simply because our Saviour's crown was made of it. I think the master, too, has a fancy for Palestine thorns. It's my belief he is going to marry our pretty Miss Emily to one of those same rare brambles; else, why does he encourage that hook-nosed young Moss to hang about the place. Did you hear what I said to him yesterday? No. Then I'll tell you. I was straightening those geraniums when he walked into the garden looking for Miss Emily.

"'Morning, Dick,' said he. 'Morning,' says I. 'What are you doing?' says he. 'Marrying flowers,' says I. 'How's that?' said he. 'Why you see,' says I, 'master is a rich gentleman; it would never do to let our valuable plants run wild just like poor people's flowers, that grow up almost in a state of nature. These geraniums, you see, are a very rare and beautiful sort, but inclined to be playful when young; so to prevent them running about all over the bed, creeping into every corner where they can find the sunshine, and twining round the first brother flower that's handy, we take this piece of white-painted stick, dig it into the ground, and tie them up to it—so. There you are, married fast as a parson could make 'em. Mind you,' said I, 'I don't mean to tell you they like it. Sometimes one of the pretty dears will pine and die. But, of course, that ain't the master's fault, nor mine; we can't allow nature to have its own way in a rich man's garden.

"You should have seen that fellow bite his lips. I don't

think he'll come to me for another lesson in horticulture. But hush, lady mine, mums the word, for here comes Miss Emily."

"Oh, Dick!" cried the little lady, "I am so glad you are here. Come into the arbour, quick, before any one misses me. There, now sit down and tell me a story, just like you used when I was a little girl. I am tired of being a young lady. I must not do this, and I must not say that. I must not even speak to you, dear old Dick, or I am scolded for it. They are all new servants in the house but you, and all the visitors are old men except Mr. Moss; papa hardly ever sees me, and mamma is always ill and cross, so are the children; and Mdlle. Barb is cross. Oh, Dick! to be a child once more. There," continued the young lady, flouncing down in a corner, "now I am a child when I sit here and you stand leaning there against the post, looking down on me like a dear good old Polyphemus; and the wind sings in the trees, and the white rose blows her leaves over us. Tell me a story, Dick, quick, before I become a young lady again."

"I thought you had forgotten all about my stories, Miss Emily," said the gardener, delightedly.

"Oh, no I haven't. I used often to think about you and your stories when I was away; and once I told that one about Hubert Maitland's wraith—you used to pretend that was true, you wicked man, I always knew better—to my governess. It was late in the evening, and we were alone on a great, lonely mountain, which we used to call the Königsstuhl; and when we came to an old ruined palace at its foot, through which we had to pass, she grew frightened, and was afraid to go further; but I made her pass through all the horrible dark arches, and pretended to see something moving in the old, windowless rooms, till she was ready to faint with terror. It was very wicked, and it frightened myself almost as much as it did her; but I couldn't help it, she was such a severe old lady and used to lecture us so about the folly of superstition, and wouldn't let us have candles in our bedrooms."

"Ah, miss, you should hear my friend, Mr. Scroggs, tell a ghost story," said Dick. "It would make your flesh creep, only he always spoils it at the last by explaining all the mystery."

out of it. He's a rare man for evidence is Ebenezer Scroggs, and wouldn't believe the Gospel without it. 'For,' says he, "truth in rags is better than a lie in satin."

"I don't want to hear him; I want you to tell it me, just as you used, and when you come to the explanatory part tell it to the rosebush you are always talking to; it would be as bad as the moral to a fable."

"Well, I'll try, Miss Emily," returned Dick, blowing his great nose violently.

But that was as far as he got, for at the moment Mdlle. Barb, all dressed in walking costume, stood at the arbour entrance, and after severely reprimanding her pupil in the French language for her low taste and want of dignity, insisted on the young lady immediately dressing and accompanying her to Kensington Gardens.

CHAPTER VII.

DICK GADAWAY IN THE CHAIR.

It was growing late when Phillip reached the "Crown and Candle." He had been informed by Mr. Scroggs that there would be no music to-night.

"To-day," the worthy landlord had remarked, "is poor Tom Turner's birthday, and this evening Dick Gadaway and I shall probably make a few remarks to the company, but they will not be fit hearing for the loikes o' thee. Go and enjoy thyself at the play, laddie."

But Phillip, feeling in no humour for play-going, took an hour's walk and returned home. As he passed up the quiet street, a tall, handsome young man glided out of the shadow of the inn and quickly vanished in the dim lamplight. Phillip caught but a brief glimpse of his face, yet it struck him as one to be long remembered. So striking was it, that for a moment Phillip thought of following him to have another look into those strange, sad eyes, which with one glance seemed to

have bewitched him. But on second thoughts he determined to enter the inn, and ask Mr. Scroggs who the handsome stranger was, and what business had brought such an unusual visitor to the "Crown and Candle. As he softly entered, he caught sight of honest Dick Gadaway standing in an oratorical attitude at the head of the table, so he glided unperceived into a seat near the door.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Gadaway, perorating and gesticulating so violently that he upset a pint of porter, two half glasses of rum and water, several clay pipes, and a sugar jar, "Gentlemen—replenish, Mr. Scroggs, and put the damage down to me—many years have passed since first I had the honour to preside at your table. For the most part you have grown greyer, your waists have grown rounder, and your noses have grown redder, but your hearts have never changed, so here is a bumper to you all."

"Hear! hear!" cried the jovial old fellows.

"Ahem, dom me!" self-gratulatory grunted Mr. Scroggs, sipping his own mild potation.

"Gentlemen," resumed Mr. Gadaway, in a saddened tone, "to-day is the eighteenth of July, and I hope there is not a man here who does not remember with gratitude the many meetings we have had on the eighteenth of the Julys that are gone. To-night we miss from our company him who has made this anniversary to be remembered all our lives. Yes, this is Tom Turner's birthday. Gentlemen, Tom Turner's memory."

The orator dropped his voice at the close of the sentence, and if he dropped a tear as well, no one saw it. Every head was bowed as reverently as his own.

"It would ill become me," resumed Mr. Gadaway, after a lengthened silence, "to forget one other, who, if we knew her less, was none the less dear to us all for his sake. It was once your happiness to have your social glasses sweetened by the smiles of one whose name we seldom mention now, but whose memory should be as sacred as our mothers' graves. Gentlemen, poor Bessie's health and happiness. May God, all loving, yet have both in store for her.

"You knew her, friends, and loved her even as you loved her tuneful foster-brother. He is in his grave, and would that

she were there at rest with him. Forgive me, if I grieve you when I speak of her. Though her name is seldom on your tongues, I know the thoughts of her are often in your hearts. Ay, my brothers, well may we now and then pause to bestow a tear on her unhappy fate. When in the cold winter nights the wind howls through the streets and the rain falls miserably, when the frost and snow are withering the flowers, when the dreary fog hangs pall-like over the city and men see not each other as they pass, but all are lonely and strangers in the world, then think we of her on whom the cold and the darkness fall the colder and the darker by the blight of sin and shame."

For half a minute Dick remained silent, then slowly and solemnly raising his hand he added, "And may God's curse rest everlastingly on his head who made her what she is!"

"Amen!" said Mr. Scroggs, and more than one excited old fellow echoed the fearful sentiment.

I know not how Mr. Gadaway and his friends might reconcile this vindictive feeling with the simple creed they all professed. Alas, that they or any believers in the story of the gentle Christ should have learned so little from Him, so much from His countrymen! Nevertheless, methink these men who cursed the wrongdoer and pitied the victim were one step in advance of some I have known who, while professing love even to the wicked, are the first to throw a stone at the erring.

"Amen!" said Mr. Scroggs, solemnly.

Phillip, whose bright, kindly nature had been nurtured on a gentler creed, flashed with anger and disgust at the fierce, implacable curse. He sought the door—it was open, and lo! there, on the threshold, with one hand on the latch the other on his broad white forehead, stood the handsome, stalwart young man who had excited his curiosity awhile ago. His fine, strong face was upturned to the sky, and as the moonlight rested on it Phillip saw in the dark eyes and quivering lips a world of agony and despair that awed him into stillness. A moment he gazed, and it seemed an hour, then, with a stifled groan, the stranger turned and walked swiftly away.

Phillip remained watching him.

"Hist," whispered some one in his ear.

He turned—Dick Gadaway was standing at his side.

"You saw him—you'll know that man again?" he asked, hurriedly.

"Among a thousand," replied Phillip.

"Quick, then, follow him, ask no questions, see where he goes, what he does, who are his companions."

"But is it not mean?" asked Phillip, half contemptuously.

"Do you think I would bid you do it if it were?" returned Dick, impatiently.

Phillip no longer hesitated; he touched Dick's extended hand and set off in chase.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OLD, OLD STORY.

DICK had hardly closed the door and returned to his seat when the audience of the "Crown and Candle" were startled by the intrusion of an individual of so singular an appearance that we must halt a minute and endeavour to describe him.

He was a tall old man, with broad, stooping shoulders and a great, white head. His face was brown and wrinkled, and scarred by accident, but looked as if it might have been gentle once, only now it was nearly hidden by his rough hair and beard, which gave it a wild and savage look. He wore an old-fashioned, green, military cloak, lined with some sort of fur, and a slouched hat, under whose broad and crumpled brim his white locks lay so long, and matted, and tangled that many years must have elapsed since they knew a barber's care. Altogether he was such an outlandish apparition that Mr. Scroggs and his customers were quite justified in the rude, open-mouthed wonder with which they greeted him.

"Is this Mr. Scroggs's inn?" asked the stranger. His voice had a soft, silvery sweetness and cadence, and his words were so distinct that had you not seen him you would have thought the speaker a young man.

Mr. Scroggs' rising suspicion of mendicity was at once dispelled.

"Ay, ay ; I be Ebenezer Scroggs, landlord of the 'Crown and Candle,' in the parish of Kensington; dom me ! What's your will, old gentleman?"

"I have been directed to you as one likely to know something of a family that lived near this place some years ago. Their name was Turner—a widow and two children—a girl and a boy."

Ebenezer and his guest exchanged expressive glances ; then the landlord said softly—

"Sit thee doon, old gentleman, for if thou'rt a friend o' theirs thou'rt welcome at the 'Crown and Candle' as snow in winter; canst find room? Sit thee doon ull 'ee?"

"Alas! good sir, I am blind," replied the intruder. It was some time ere he was comfortably seated before the fire, owing to six or seven men rising simultaneously, and each in undisciplined politeness thrusting his own clumsy chair into collision with the others, to the confusion of the ancient gentleman and the severe bruising of his shins.

"So thee'st a friend o' poor widow Turner?" sighed Ebenezer.

"I was—she is living I hope?"

The landlord shook his head sadly—then remembering that gestures were not calculated to enlighten the blind, he gulped out—

"Dead!"

"And—the boy?"

"Dead!" replied Ebenezer, in the same sepulchral voice ; "shatteration o' the nerves. Fiddled himself into heaven, by God, sir!"

Why the landlord substituted this last expression for his wonted "dom me" I do not know, unless it better fitted with the tear that fell upon his heaving chest.

"And—and—the girl—she is not dead? do not tell me she is dead?" faltered the old man.

Another tear trickled down the landlord's rosy cheek. He answered never a word.

"Speak, for the love of God, speak, man! say she lives!" cried the old man.

"Yes, yes. I believe so," gasped Ebenezer.

"My God, I thank thee!" earnestly said the old man.

Dick Gadaway grasped his hand convulsively. Hush, friend," he said, "you thank Him for a curse."

There was something in Dick's sympathising voice and manner that told the whole tale.

The old man rose trembling, and lifted his hands wildly, but soon staggered back into his chair. His venerable white head sunk on his chest, and for a few minutes he sobbed like a child. Then, when the first flood of sorrow had passed, he turned his white sightless eyes on Dick, and said solemnly—

"Tell me all—all. I can bear it now."

There was not much to tell—only the old story of love betrayed, and a beautiful young life blighted in the bud—only the old history that has been told in every language and age since the world began, and, alas! will be told and reacted in spite of the telling in many ages yet to come; until men shall learn to love the spirit of Him who said, "neither do I condemn thee," better than that of the stern barbarians who first taught their fellow men the nefariousness of the frail, and the virtue of the un-found-out.

The old man sat with bowed head till Dick had ended his sorrowful tale, then he raised his poor, blind eyes tearfully to heaven, and uttered a low wailing cry as if he were reproaching God, but he neither spoke nor moved again for an hour. Then he rose, and giving the company his blessing he retired as noiselessly as he had arrived.

CHAPTER IX.

ALARIC.

TWO minutes' swift running brought Phillip in sight of the object of his chase. The mysterious stranger had slackened his pace and was now leisurely walking down the Hammer-smith Road. Phillip crept under the shadow of the walls of

Holland Park, and followed unobserved. Perhaps the object of his curiosity was too much occupied with his own thoughts to notice him. Be that as it may, Phillip crept nearer and nearer till by the time they reached Hammersmith Church they were nearly side by side. Westward of the bridge there stood then, as now, several quaint old houses facing the river, and possessing large gardens with separate entrances in the rear. It was one of these gardens the young man entered, and Phillip, after a moment's hesitation, followed. The unsuspecting object of his pursuit stepped into the dark room, and drew up the blinds of the opposite window, whereupon the moonlight came flushing into the room, revealing its homely furniture, and the great solemn profile of the stranger as he stood motionless, gazing on the river. After a minute he turned impatiently and touched a bell. A stout servant entered.

"Brandy—and order out the outrigger."

The man disappeared with silent promptitude, and presently returned with a decanter.

"Bob is gone, sir, and taken the key of the boathouse," he said, hesitatingly.

His Herculean master growled out a great oath.

"Bring me a hatchet."

Again the man disappeared unquestioningly, as though fetching a hatchet were as much one of his normal duties as filling a decanter. Mr. Gadaway's emissary deeming his hateful task now accomplished, was about to return, when he was startled by an altercation in the passage.

"I know he is at home; I saw him enter and I will see him."

The voice, though excited, was so sweet that Phillip instinctively listened.

"Can't, ma'am," replied a voice, which by its authoritative sharpness, Phillip conjectured to belong to the stout manservant, "it's Mr. Fane's orders, and I obeys 'em. The last time a lady called, he says, says he, when she was gone, 'What do you mean, sir, by telling people I am at home? I am not at home—I am never at home, and if any more ladies call tell 'em I am drowned and the coroner is holding a inquest on me at the workus.' So you see, miss, you had better go with-

out wasting time, for if you see him he will show you out, as he did the other one, though she was dressed so fine, and wore no end of paint on her face ; so don't say I didn't tell you."

"He did not anticipate that I should call—indeed he will see me," pleaded the musical voice, and pushing violently past the obstructing servant, a tall, graceful woman glided into the room.

Phillip crept under the shadow of the wall just in time to escape the burly stranger himself, who leapt out into the garden. He started at sight of his fair visitor, and by the moonlight Phillip thought he saw the blood leave his bronzed face and neck, but he immediately recovered his equanimity, and extending his great brown hand greeted her kindly, exclaiming—

"Pearl ! Pearl ! is it possible ? This is indeed good of you."

"Alaric," said the girl—she seemed quite a girl by the side of her stalwart companion—"give me joy ; I am free."

"Free, Pearl ?" queried the young man.

"No," returned the girl, in a bitter tone, "not free from the past. The slave's fetters may be broken, but the marks of the gyves remain, and he walks God's free world a stranger in it. But there, why do I talk thus to you, Alaric ? Forgive me, oh, forgive me ; I think I am mad, sometimes. There, sit down and let me look into your dear, handsome face—who can tell if we shall ever meet again ?"

She spoke very sadly as she looked up into his face, as such a woman looks only at one face in all her life. Her companion turned from that long, loving glance as if it were the bitterest reproach.

A moment they sat, hand in hand, silent. The young man's head was bowed, and the girl's dark eyes fed eagerly on his handsome features ; then he drew her nearer to his side and said, eagerly—

"But I do not understand you, Pearl."

"And you never did, Alaric," replied the girl, with just a shade of her former bitterness, but more of sadness.

"True. Forgive me, Pearl, for a blind, unthinking villain !"

"No, Alaric, you were never that," returned his companion, passionately, "you were always kind and good ; but God

made us for each others harm ;" then composedly, "now listen, dear, and I will tell you something that will please you—I have left the stage."

"Yes, I read it."

"You will be glad to learn—that is, if you are anything like the Alaric I once knew—that with my theatrical life I have left for good all its acquaintances and connections."

"Not ——?"

"No, not Lord E——," she said, blushing deeply, "*he* has left me."

The young man leapt forward impetuously.

"Why, Pearl, this is the best news I have heard this many a year!" he cried, excitedly. "But is this all you have to say to me, Pearl? There must be something more?"

"Yes, there is something more. Alaric, I loved you once, and it is because I loved you I bear the pain and shame of this interview. You were all good then, and it was my sin, more than your folly, which made you what you are. Oh, Alaric, I would die to see you again what you once were! Promise me—I think you would have done much for me once—give me one solemn promise before I bid you farewell—perhaps for ever—that you will try to forget these bitter and unjust self-reproachings that are driving you to misery and ruin."

"Forget!" echoed her companion. "Can I command forgetfulness?" He paused a moment and gasped for breath, then he resumed, impatiently—"There is but one way of forgetting. Come back to me, Pearl. Oh, I am miserable—most miserable! and you are miserable—come back to me, Pearl! Bad as I am I can love you now, and you will forgive me, and the past shall be redeemed by the future. Be my wife!"

The girl half suppressed a little cry of joy, and putting out her hands made an impulsive step forward, "O Alaric," she cried, with a great choking sob, "how I thank you for this!"

She sank in a chair, and as she sat with her face in her hands, her graceful limbs all convulsed and trembling, her companion crept to her side, and kneeling there wound his great arm lovingly round her waist. "Yes, dear Pearl," he

continued persuasively, "let me render you such reparation as I can—be my wife!"

There fell a long silence, so still that Phillip, where he stood fascinated in the garden, could hear the quick throbbing of his own heart as audibly as the lapping and sobbing of the river. The girl slowly rose, and gazing earnestly into her companion's eyes, she said, slowly and deliberately:

"Alaric, look me now in the face and tell me that you love me!"

The young man placed his hands on her shoulder, and his great, sad eyes sought hers wistfully—looked into them steadily a moment, then wavered, and glanced aside.

The poor girl uttered a low wail of despair; but recovering the command of her feelings with that strange readiness which Phillip had already observed, she tossed up her head proudly:

"No," she said. It is the same dear, honest face; you cannot even look a lie. Good-bye, dear Alaric!"

He sprang forward as if to clasp her in his arms, but she waved him off, crying,

"Hush! my future is determined. But"—she added, restraining the sobs that choked her voice—"but you will know that, alive or dead, I am innocent from this day forth."

She raised her face resolutely as she spoke; sad, beautiful, and proud as a fallen angel looking to Heaven with all the memories of its lost purity still fresh and aching within. The next instant her head drooped again as she put out her hand, saying, sadly, "Once more, good-bye, Alaric!"

"No," he cried, "it shall not be good-bye, Pearl. I will follow you to the world's end, and make you happy yet in spite of yourself."

He seized the delicate hand and kissed it passionately. But the weeping girl plucked it from his grasp and fled.

Her garments touched Phillip as she passed. But her beautiful eyes were brimming over with tears, and he remained unperceived. When she had reached the confines of the garden she looked back and waved her hand to Alaric, who was standing at the open window, and Phillip saw her no more.

The streets were now wholly deserted, and Phillip passed

swiftly on, looking often up at the bright stars, and pondering on the mysterious fate which had entangled and wrecked these two young lives—he so strong and noble, she so beautiful and lovable. That scene in the darkling room by the river was burned into his brain—every word, every gesture. Then he thought of that other strange gathering at the inn ; of grotesque Dick Gadaway's tearful reference to some poor girl they had known ; of his terrible curse ; and the vision of that handsome, upturned face, listening horror-stricken at the door.

"Alas," sighed Phillip, "I begin to understand you now. Poor old Dick. Who could know her and not love her? God help her ; would I could. Ha!" he cried, coming to a sudden halt, "how do I know I cannot? It may not be too late."

A gust of wind whistling down the road seemed to bear the words away, and as it lulled, a voice, musical as Phillip's own, but sounding softer and far away, broke like an echo on the silence,

"Too late ! too late !"

Phillip started. There was not a soul to be seen in all the long vista before him, and behind, only a poor, old, blind man, feeling his way against the wind.

"The very air seems full of mystery to-night," thought Phillip.

(To be continued.)





The Growth and Errors of Scepticism.

IT has been remarked by a foreign personage of eminence that "the English are almost all Deists, Infidels, and Freethinkers." We are, however, thankful in being able to qualify this statement very considerably, but in doing so we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that scepticism is on the increase, and deservedly calls for much attention.

The latter part of the nineteenth century is favoured with the advancement of scientific research of a profound nature ; the distance of the planets, the weight of the globe, and other marvels of an equally astounding nature, have become comprehensible to the mind of man. Space is no longer an insurmountable barrier ; we have almost realised the boast of Shakespere's *Puck*, and put "a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes."

These scientific researches, aided by the enlightenment of geologists, are used by Atheists as a standpoint for calling into question the authenticity of the Bible, and resolved by them into the interrogation, "Is there a God who possesses the Omnipotence and Omnipresence which we are taught to believe in the Sacred Writings?" The question is replied to by sceptics in the negative, who seek to prove, principally by geology, that their assumption is correct.

In a short article of this kind, it would be impossible to enter into the question in an exhaustive manner, and combat the numerous arguments with which we are confronted. I shall endeavour, therefore, to reply to the primary statements, and seek to disprove the erroneous interpretations of some of the most important in the Bible. The first and most important of these is the *anno mundi*, given as B.C. 4004, which is inferred by unbelievers to be incorrect, these ideas being

derived from the discovery of mammoth remains, and other matter which must have existed prior to this date.

The first verse in Genesis reads thus: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." If, as Atheists affirm, the "beginning" was before B.C. 4004, it should not be inferred from this that the Bible is erroneous. This period, it must be remembered, is the orthodox *anno mundi* given by the translators, and was placed in the margin at a period when science had not attained the position observable in the present day. Again, we have the question as to the length of the first "seven days." May it not reasonably be supposed that a considerable period elapsed between the first and second days, and so on until the seventh? We are informed in the Bible that a "thousand ages" in the sight of God are but equivalent to a day with us. In 1820, Mr. Whittaker, of St. John's College, Cambridge, writing to defend the authorised version against Mr. Bellamy, says: "There are many passages, particularly in the Old Testament, of such acknowledged difficulty that learned men never did, and perhaps never will, agree about them."

We next have the Creation, the formation of the works of nature being by sceptics attributed to chance. In accounting for the creation of man, we are told that inorganic gradually formed itself into organic matter, this process being followed by the appearance of the *genus homo* in his lowest state, akin to the beasts of the field in point of intellect—this process being followed by a gradual improvement as time rolled on, until the culmination, which appeared in the shape of a rational being. The foregoing may be deemed a construction of the problem; the *onus probandi*, however, does not appear succinctly proved. In the enlightened mind nothing is attributable to chance; inventions, manufactures, have each their work of construction before the effect becomes visible. If then the works of man require a formation, how much more the works of God! There is a grand reply to Atheistical theories in the last verse of the xxix. Chap. Deut.: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God."

Bacon in his essay upon Atheism eloquently puts forward his denunciation, and says: "They that deny a God destroy man's nobility. . . . It destroys likewise magnanimity,

and the raising of human nature ; for take an example of a dog, and mark what a generosity and courage he will put on when he finds himself maintained by a man, who to him is instead of a God or *melior natura*, which courage is manifestly such as that creature without that confidence of a better nature than his own could never attain. So man, when he resteth and assureth himself upon Divine protection and favour, gathereth a force and faith which human nature in itself could not attain ; therefore, as Atheism is in all respects hateful, so in this, that it depriveth human nature of the means to exalt itself above human frailty."

From the commencement of history we find it has been the custom of mankind to recognise a superior Being or beings. To those who were not privileged to know (as the men of Athens) "The Great Unknown," they had the notion, though not the extent and latitude of it. Thus in modern times we find the Indians of the West with names for the particular gods whom they worshipped ; others in earlier times have worshipped images "who have eyes and see not, and ears but hear not." Hence the idea with the heathen that there are superior beings appears to be instilled intuitively in their minds.

The power of our religion is historically shown from the year 1517, when the work of the Reformation first began, and the prosperity which has attended this country from that date and downwards is worthy of notice. Mark, in the year 1588, the dawning of our naval glory, when Philip the Second of Spain, with the real object of nipping the bud of Protestantism, commissioned the Great Armada. Let us again glance at it in an ethnical form, and direct our attention to the great empire of China, with Buddhism, Confucianism (which is little better than Atheism) and Taonism ; China stands in the same position as she stood 2,000 years hence.

These facts tell us conclusively that prosperity has attended the embracing of Christianity, and has marked the growth of a nation so embracing it. "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God ;" in reply an eminent writer aptly observed, "The fool hath said" and not "hath *thought* in his heart there is no God."

In 1708 Swift published "an argument against abolishing

Christianity." The argument is a fine piece of irony, showing that if Christianity were abolished, "the Freethinkers, the strong reasoners, and the men of profound learning," would have no subject left whereon to display their wisdom: "What wonderful productions of wit should we be deprived of from those whose genius, by continual practice, hath been wholly turned upon railing and invective against religion, and would therefore never be able to shine or to distinguish themselves upon any other subject!"

There is another point upon which I will briefly touch, and that is the fear of death. If, as sceptics affirm, there is no future state, how is the indisputable fact contested that this dread Power is viewed with such concern by the many? One great writer has written, "Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark." If no future state, why should this fear be felt?

History clearly proves that prosperity has attended the progress of those countries who have embraced a religion with God at its head, and it is to be much regretted that our own countrymen (in many instances) have strong objections to "prejudicing" the minds of the rising generation taught in Government schools by excluding the teaching of the Bible. We are told that the religious instruction is looked after in Sunday-schools and in similar institutions, but this does not stem the tide of unbelief. The Bible requires to be thoroughly explained, many of the passages being of a profound nature, which cannot be grasped unless the pupil receive careful instruction, and the consequence of their not being so instructed is that sceptical works are frequently read and believed by those whose knowledge is not sufficient to confute the arguments which are brought forward.

The objection to receiving Bibles, &c., in our Board-schools is strikingly depicted by an occurrence which took place at B—— some time since, and which proves that members frequently make their religious views secondary to their political. An offer was made by Mrs. P—— of a large number of Bibles and other religious works (as prizes) to the enlightened and intellectual members of the School Board at B——. This generous offer was at first declined, but upon consideration the refusal was withdrawn, and the offer accepted with a

"liberal" spirit, upon condition that the address of the translators to King James at the commencement of the Bible was omitted, in order that the minds of the pupils might not be prejudiced. This reminds one of the anecdote told of Swift, who upon one occasion remonstrated with a sceptical friend for omitting to cause his *protégé* to be trained religiously. The gentleman replied that he did not wish to "prejudice" the boy's mind in favour of religion. Shortly afterwards they were walking together in the Dean's garden, when his sceptical friend, observing a plot of uncultivated land, pointed out the advantage that would accrue from planting it. Swift replied, in his usual ironical manner, that "he did not wish to have the ground prejudiced."

It certainly appears to the reflective mind that religious teaching presents the only barrier to the spread of unbelief; the present age is not profound, and affords scope to those who wish to gain notoriety and fill their pockets by the publication of Atheistical works, which instil into the mind the pernicious doctrine, "Ye shall not surely die." The philosophical mind cannot accept the doctrine that there is no God, it being an acknowledged axiom that a teaching which does no harm must do some good, therefore if from this reason alone the doctrine of religion must of necessity benefit us.

Again, we have a fine construction to work upon when we survey nature. Take the simple blade of grass springing from the earth in a manner which baffles the keenest philosopher; certainly we cannot allow that this blade springs of its own accord; but we are told it is by the joint action of the sun, together with the moisture of the ground, which causes this growth. True, but this inference has only been drawn from seeing the process carried on before our eyes, but it does not account for the *first* blade of grass which made its appearance on this earth. If, then, the growth and construction of so simple a plant as this causes us to pause in grand contemplation, how much more should we muse upon the construction of the planets revolving in their ceaseless orbits, together with the effects which they produce upon our own globe! In studying these grand problems, wonderful does this reply appear, "My ways are not your ways," saith the Lord!

WM. W. BAKER.



A STORY OF CANADIAN LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

THE SLEIGH-DRIVE.

WHAT a lovely day! Oh! do come, Harry, and have a 'snow-shoe.' I really cannot stay in the house on such a day as this."

The speaker was a pretty brunette of eighteen, who was standing at the window of a large, well-warmed room, looking out on the snowy scene before her. Harry, her brother, comfortably ensconced in a large arm-chair by the fire, lazily replied:

"What! you don't mean to say, Flo, that you want to drag me out on snow-shoes again? Once a day is enough, isn't it?"

"No, of course it isn't, you dear, lazy boy."

"Well, come along. Put on all your furs and wraps, for the thermometer is twenty degrees below zero."

We will leave Flo and Harry to proceed on their snowshoe tramp, and remain in the house (as doubtless all my English friends will prefer doing on such a cold day) for the purpose of describing its inmates and their position in life.

Harry and Flo were the only children of Mr. and Mrs. Harding, who resided on the outskirts of Toronto, in what was formerly Canada West, now Ontario. They were what is termed "rich," and their house was a model of comfort and luxury. The lady of the house was a Canadian, but her husband was English. He had come to Canada at an early age, and being of a steady, plodding disposition, had worked his way on in life, and risen from the post of a clerk in a merchant's office to the head of a wealthy mercantile firm.

A few years before the time we are speaking of he had retired from business, and now spent much of his time in hunting and fishing, of which sports he was passionately fond.

When Flo returned from her walk on snow-shoes she found an invitation from a friend to join a moonlight sleigh-drive on the following evening. In Canada these drives by moonlight are very usual, the party generally going by pairs in small sleighs, holding two, called "cutters."

Of course, Flo was enchanted, and immediately despatched a note of acceptance to her friend, Miss Alice Beverly.

Miss Beverly, when the morrow came, further informed Flo that the sleighing party was to drive to an old farm-house about seven miles from Toronto, where they were to have a dance and a supper.

The Hardings were punctually at the rendezvous, both seated in a pretty shell-shaped little sleigh, with white, wolf-skin robes. The number of cutters was nearly twenty, besides two family sleighs. The drive to the farm was delightful, with the moon shining down upon them, the crisp snow crackling, and the musical bells ringing out in the cold night air, the merry party drove along singing glees and catches as they went.

Upon their arrival at the farm, after taking off their wraps the ladies severally sallied forth into the room where the dancing was to be.

After dancing to their hearts' content, it struck them, at about two in the morning, that it was time to go, remembering that they had a long drive before them.

Flo Harding's last partner, a nervous young fellow and an ardent admirer of hers, begged her to allow him to drive her home; and as Harry had announced his intention of driving Miss Beverly, Flo said "yes," though rather unwillingly, as she thought Mr. Hatton an intolerable bore, and would have preferred anybody else.

"Mr. Hatton, *do* take care. If you don't mind we shall be upset in a snowbank," exclaimed Flo, cutting short a sentimental speech made by her cavalier. This made Mr. Hatton rather more careful for a few minutes, but after a short time he grew careless, and paid no attention to his driving. At last the sleigh stuck in a snowdrift, and in the endeavours of the horse to free itself from the snow, reaching to its chest, the cutter was overturned, and the occupants rolled out into the snow. Mr. Hatton, more nervous than ever, stupidly let the

reins go. The horse, after a few plunges, reached the beaten track, and immediately proceeded to gallop away. Harry, who was in his cutter behind, threw the reins to Miss Beverly, and leaping out, helped Flo out of the drift, in which she was floundering in the most undignified manner. "I am not hurt," she cried, but when she tried to walk she found her ankle was sprained. Mr. Hatton had fallen on her, and, of course, he was not in the least hurt. Alice Beverly managed to squeeze down in the bottom of Harry's cutter, and Flo took her place.

"You had better go and catch your runaway horse, Hatton; I shall not trust my sister to you again in a hurry, I can tell you," said Harry. "What on earth made you so confoundedly stupid as to drive into a drift?"

"I am awfully sorry, Harding, but really, Miss Harding, I hope you are not much hurt."

"Oh, no, pray don't trouble yourself about me," replied Flo, and then she added, maliciously, "I wish you had been more careful, for *I do not* like having a quantity of snow melting up my sleeves."

"I cannot tell you how sorry I am, Miss Harding."

"There, cut it short, Hatton, it is too cold to stay talking," interrupted Harry, crossly, and whipping up his horse, it bounded forward, and they had soon left the unfortunate Mr. Hatton to pursue his runaway steed. Upon reaching home, Harry carried Flo into the house, and having deposited her on a sofa, called his mother, and explained the accident to her. He then returned to the sleigh to drive Miss Beverly to her house, and summon a doctor for his sister.

I must tell my readers that Harry had taken the opportunity during the drive to ask Miss Beverly a "certain question," and as the answer he received was in the affirmative, he was in high spirits.

"Shall we go to your house or to Dr. Ashton's first, Alice?"

"To Dr. Ashton's, by all means, Harry. I hope that it will not turn out to be a serious sprain."

"If it does I shall have something more to say to Hatton."

"What nonsense! My dear Harry, do you think he upset the sleigh on purpose?"

"I think he is a most—well, we won't say what. I shall

have some news to tell *monsieur votre père* to-morrow, eh, darling?" &c., &c.

When the doctor saw the sprained ankle, he pronounced the sprain to be slight. "But, though slight, the foot must not be used for a week, or else we shall have you laid up for a month, my dear," said Dr. Ashton, who had attended the Hardings ever since they could remember, and took the liberty of "my dearing" Flo, and calling Harry by his Christian name, after the manner of many doctors.

Next morning Flo experienced two pleasant surprises; the first was that Harry told her of his engagement to Alice Beverly—it was not exactly a surprise, for Flo had often had her conjectures upon the subject; then Mrs. Harding came into the room with an open letter in her hand, saying, "This is from your Aunt Elinor, asking you and Harry to stay with her at Montreal; she asks me too, but I shall not go, as I do not care for Montreal; besides, papa, would miss us all."

"Oh, mamma, how delightful! for when do they ask us?"

"For as soon as possible; you will not be able to go for a fortnight, however, on account of your ankle, and besides, I suppose my darling will want several new dresses, &c."

"Yes, mamma, dear; for, of course, as it is the season at Montreal there will be a good deal of gaiety. I wish you could come, mamma."

"I should not care to go except to see Aunt Elinor."

Here the mother and daughter entered into a long discussion, the subjects of which being chiefly dressmaking and millinery we will omit, as it would not interest my readers.

At last Flo's ankle, after a week of nursing, was pronounced as cured by Dr. Ashton, and the day for their journey to Montreal was fixed. This journey was not unattended by accidents: in the first place the train ran off the "track" or line, as it is called in England; and in the next it was stopped for six hours by the snow, which had accumulated on the line.

However, when they *did* arrive they were welcomed with great warmth. Aunt Elinor had become very anxious upon their non-arrival; her anxiety owing, as she said, "to that dear thoughtless boy not having telegraphed."

But we must stay the progress of my tale to introduce my readers to Aunt Elinor and her family.

Aunt Elinor, Mrs. Harding's sister, had married a wealthy gentleman named Fortescue. They had two daughters, whose characters as well as their persons were singularly different. Esther Fortescue, the eldest, aged twenty, was a very dark brunette, with masses of black hair, and cold, bright black eyes.

Evelyn, the youngest, was neither a brunette nor a blonde ; her complexion was of that beautiful clear white, tinged with rose colour, large expressive grey eyes, a low broad forehead, crowned with masses of golden brown hair. Both sisters were much admired, but the youngest much more so than the eldest ; but Evelyn had one fault (?) and that was—she was a flirt !

CHAPTER II.

THE ARRIVAL.

A CALECHE on runners drove up to the door of a handsome house on the outskirts of Montreal. The driver dismounted and was proceeding to ring the bell when the door opened, disclosing Aunt Elinor, who had come to welcome her nephew and niece. After having satisfied the curiosity of the household as to why they hadn't arrived before, Harry and his sister were shown to their respective rooms, with an injunction to dress quickly, as a large dinner-party was to come off that evening. The guests were invited for seven, and it was then half-past six.

"We dine at half-past seven punctually, my dear, so don't be late," were Mrs. Fortescue's parting words to Flo, as she showed her the room assigned for her use.

There was a general réunion of the cousins upstairs, before they went down to the drawing-room,

"Oh, Flo, I am so glad you have come at last ; I began to think you must have had an accident ; do you know that"—and here she whispered a name to Flo—"is coming," she added aloud.

"Why, Evy, I thought he was in Quebec!" cried Flo, colouring.

"No, he only stayed there a month—are you not *sorry*?" asked Evelyn, bent on teasing.

"Well, I cannot see why it should make any difference to me," answered Flo, striving (without success) to look *nonchalante*. To this remark Evelyn replied by an incredulous smile.

"But we must really go down, Evelyn; don't tease, there's a darling," and so saying the three cousins descended to the drawing-rooms not yet filled by the expected guests.

But we must now give our readers a peep behind the scenes. Doubtless they will wish to know the whispered name; it was that of a gentleman who Flo had met several times in Toronto, and also during a previous visit to Mrs. Fortescue; and sad to say, Miss Harding had lent a too willing ear to his flattering speeches and soft words. In fact, Flo Harding was very much in love with Percy Douglas, for that was his name. Esther Fortescue, being of an envious disposition, was terribly jealous of Flo, for Mr. Douglas evidently admired her greatly; and in fact, Esther hated her cousin, considering her in the light of a rival.

Miss Harding was taken into dinner by Mr. Douglas, Esther being consigned to Harry, and Evelyn to a friend whom Mr. Douglas had introduced to her.

Previously Flo had always been heard to declare that dinner parties were very stupid, slow things; but this one was quite exceptional.

"Is Miss Beverly still in Toronto?" inquired Esther of Harry.

"Yes, dear me, haven't you heard that she is engaged?"

"No, is she really, I am rather surprised, for I do not think——" said Esther innocently, for nobody knew of Harry's engagement.

"Stop, if you please, Esther, before you go any further I must tell you she is engaged to me," Harry said, in a low tone, fearing that Esther was about to make some disparaging remark on his fiancée.

"Harry! I beg your pardon—not that I was going to say anything against her. Why did you not tell us?"

"Soup, sir?" said a voice at his elbow; and the conversation was then abruptly terminated, and it was not renewed that evening by Esther, but of course the rest of the Fortescues heard of it. To describe all the amusements which our young people enjoyed during their stay in Montreal would take too many pages, and so we will only take a few of them for description.

"I say, Flo!" exclaimed Evelyn, flying into her room one afternoon in a most undignified fashion, "mamma and papa say we may give some private theatricals on my birthday."

"How jolly, it is to-day fortnight, is it not?"

"Yes, my dear Flo, only a fortnight to choose the charades, learn our parts and rehearse; and just think of the invitations we have accepted, and others which we shall have to accept."

"Never mind, Evy, we shall have to work hard; but we cannot act them by ourselves; who shall we ask to act?"

"Oh, I know numbers of people who can act, Mr. Douglas does capitally."

So that day Evelyn, Flo, and Esther sallied forth to the houses of their young lady friends and procured the ready promise of their services.

Harry and Fortescue also invited a number of gentlemen to perform the part of actors for the time being. A carpenter was engaged to make a stage in the billiard-room; some few scenes were procured, and after a great deal of rehearsing the amateurs were ready to act the charades and "tableaux vivants" which had been chosen. One of the "tableaux vivants" was that of "Romeo and Juliet." "The Sleeping Beauty" was among the charades; Flo took the part of the Princess, a Montreal cousin that of the Prince, and the other parts were distributed amongst friends.

Esther was to take the part of Juliet, while Mr. Douglas represented Romeo.

When this last tableau was fixed upon, Mr. Douglas said something to Flo about hoping they should act it together; but Esther put herself forward to personate Juliet, at the same time giving Mr. Douglas a broad hint to take Romeo's part, which he would not have accepted if it had not been for Flo, who urged him good naturedly, for she would have liked to have been Juliet very much.

The charades went off capitally, and had a numerous audience; they finished the evening by a dance and supper, and all enjoyed it extremely.

CHAPTER III.

MISTAKEN.

AN invitation to a ball arrived a week after the charades, for the Fortescues and Hardings.

Unhappily Flo took cold on her chest the day before the ball, and therefore could not go. Evelyn offered to stay at home to keep her cousin from feeling lonely, but of course Flo would not hear of it.

In the evening, after helping her cousins dress, Flo ensconced herself in a comfortable arm-chair by the fire, with a book, to await their return.

Doubtless my readers will say, "What a silly thing for a person with a cold to do;" so it was, but Flo Harding being a careless young lady the idea of it being foolish did not strike her.

When the Fortescues came home they gave a long description of the ball to Flo, at the same time scolding her for sitting up for them.

After detailing everything there came a silence—Esther broke it by saying:

"I have something to tell both of you: Mr. Douglas proposed to me to-night, and I accepted him."

"*What, Esther?*"

"My dear Evelyn, did you not hear?"

"I always thought he was destined for—but, my darling Esther, I am very glad," said Evy, kissing her.

Not a word had poor Flo said now—speaking in the calmest voice she could command:

"I hope you will be very happy, Esther," and after receiving a "Thank you, Flo," from her cousin, she bade them good-night and went to her room. Once there she threw herself on her bed in an agony of grief. "Percy, Percy, darling, how could you deceive me? I wish I was dead! Oh, Percy, Percy," moaned the poor child. It was her first great sorrow,

and she felt it bitterly. All that long night she could not sleep, anon pacing up and down the room, then tossing restlessly on the bed.

In the morning, though hardly able, she went down to breakfast—many were the exclamations which greeted her appearance.

"My dearest child, how ill you look!" cried good Aunt Elinor.

"Flo," asked Harry, "what is the matter?"

"You should not have stayed up so late last night, Flo," said Evelyn.

"It is only my cold," answered she, feeling inclined to run away from all the various comments on her pale cheeks and violet encircled eyes. Esther alone was silent, knowing something more than cold had made Flo look so ill. Presently the brother and sister were left alone.

"Now, Flo, dear, I want to know what has occurred to make you so wretched?" demanded Harry.

"Nonsense, my dear boy, you know I have a bad cold. Oh, have you heard the good news?" replied Flo, anxious to get it over.

"No; what is it?"

"Esther is engaged to Mr. Douglas," said she, bravely.

"Eh?" cried Harry, in astonishment.

"Yes; but uncle and aunt, for some reason Esther did not explain, are not to be told yet, so nobody must say a word about it, not even to the happy man himself," explained Flo, with a forced laugh, and a curious break in her voice.

Harry drew her to him.

"Poor little Flo!—then that is the cause of those pale cheeks?"

Flo's only answer was a sob.

"My darling Flo, never mind. I should like to shoot that brute Douglas!"

"Don't, Harry, don't," implored Flo, "I cannot bear it. Take me home, Harry, I must not stay here."

"Yes, dear, and you must try and forget——"

"Harry, I shall *never* forget—it would be impossible!" cried poor Flo, her whole frame shaken with sobs.

"Hush, hush, dear; I will write to-night to mother."

"You must not tell her why we want to leave Montreal, Harry—I will tell her."

"Very well; I will say that we both have had enough of gaiety and want to return."

The next day Flo happened to be alone in the drawing-room when Mr. Douglas was announced.

Flo crimsoned, for she had hoped (against her heart) that she would not see him again before leaving Montreal.

"Miss Harding, I am sorry to see you looking so ill," exclaimed he.

"Oh, thank you, it is nothing but a slight cold," said Flo, coldly; "I am sorry my aunt and cousins have gone out," she added.

"I only wanted to see you, Miss Harding," said Mr. Douglas, accompanying his words with a tender glance. "You *must* know, Flo—I may call you so—that I love you."

"Happily for me, Mr. Douglas, I know of your prior engagement to my cousin Miss Fortescue," said Flo, as calmly and indifferently as she could; but in spite of all her efforts to the contrary she trembled, and large tears escaped from her eyes.

"I engaged to Esther Fortescue?" cried he, in astonishment—"I, Miss Harding? Who in the name of Heaven told you that?"

"Esther. Is it not true, then?" asked Flo, in her turn astonished.

"True? Flo, my darling, did you think it true?" he answered, taking her in his arms.

Our poor little heroine, though sad no longer, could not help the tears flowing fast.

"Was that horrible report the reason of that pale face?" he asked, kissing away the tears.

"It made me so wretched, I could not help it."

"My darling, my darling, call me Percy, and tell me you do not believe *that* now."

She complied, and the lovers were supremely happy, Flo especially, for she had made up her mind she could never "smile again."

"How *could* Esther tell me that? I did not think she could be so cruel," she said.

"She made my darling unhappy by a cruel falsehood ; never mind now, *mignonne*, we are happy now."

But now to explain Esther's conduct. In telling Flo that she was engaged to Mr. Douglas she hoped that the effect would be to make her cousin leave Montreal, and then, her rival out of the way, Esther hoped that Mr. Douglas would forget her and turn his attention to herself.

Percy had not yet left Flo, and while they were enjoying their lover's talk the door of the room in which they were opened and Harry appeared. Flo jumped up and would have escaped if he had not prevented her.

"Ah, Harding, I have no doubt you have heard the same false report as I——, as your sister."

"Let me go, Harry," implored Flo, but he held her fast.

"False ! how extraordinary," exclaimed he.

"Ay, utterly untrue."

"Oh ! Harry, please, *please* let me go," in an agony of shyness.

"Then, Douglas, I suppose——"

"Yes, my dear fellow, you suppose, I have no doubt, that Miss Harding has—has made me very happy by—by——" said Douglas, not knowing how to end his sentence.

"Yes, I understand ; let me congratulate you."

"Oh ! Harry, mayn't I go ?" asked Flo, in an imploring tone.

"No, for I am going ; but first I am entitled to a kiss. Don't be jealous, Douglas," he said, laughing, and left the room after inviting his future brother-in-law to stay to dinner.

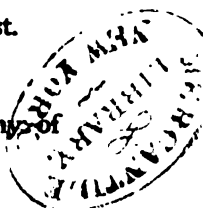
"Percy, do not tell Aunt Elinor or uncle about Esther ; they would so sorry."

"No, Flo, I will not, as you wish it. Shall I say anything to your cousin ?"

"Oh ! no, no ; I must tell her, it would not do for you to say anything about it to her, she would be so humiliated ; no, I must do that."

But, as it happened, Flo was spared telling Esther of her engagement, for Harry had spoken to his uncle and aunt about it, and it had also reached Evelyn's ears.

When the servants had left the room after dinner, the dessert being on the table, Mr. Fortescue proposed the health of the "future bride and bridegroom." Mr. Douglas returned



thanks ; Flo watched Esther, who crimsoned with shame and mortification, and then, recovering herself, joined her very cold good wishes to those of the rest of the party.

Next morning came a letter from Mrs. Harding to her daughter, surprised at her children wanting to come home, but adding that she missed them very much, and thought that they had been away long enough. Evelyn condoled with Flo for having to leave Montreal and her lover so soon after her engagement ; but, happily for Flo, when her parents heard of it they sent a cordial invitation to Mr. Douglas to come and stay with them for as long as he could, which of course he willingly accepted, and accompanied his fiancée and her brother to their home.

And here, with a few concluding remarks on the *dramatis personæ* of my story, I cannot do better than conclude.

True to the old adage, saying that "the course of true love never runs smoothly," our lovers were separated for a time, for Mr. Douglas was obliged to go to England on account of some property he had inherited by the death of an uncle. However, returning at the end of a year he and Flo Harding were married. Harry and Alice Beverly followed their example soon after. Esther Fortescue never married, but remained single all her life.

CANADIENNE.





WHAT WILL SOCIETY SAY?

A NOVEL.

BY MERVYN MERRITON,

Author of "Romances of the Chivalric Ages," "The Ringwoods of Ringwood," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XV.

CON quitting Frank, a little way from the Château R——, Miles Berrington had proposed that they should breakfast together, the next morning, at the restaurant of the *Etablissement*, adding that, for good reasons of his own, he should, on this particular occasion, prefer the Vicomte's room to his undeniably agreeable company.

When Frank reached the restaurant at the time appointed, he found his father's old friend (having already given his orders) seated before one of the little tables on the terrace. Impatient to explain for what "good reasons" he had desired this tête-à-tête, Miles Berrington rushed *in medias res* with, "Frank, my dear boy, I don't hesitate to say that you have such a chance before you as not one young fellow in a hundred thousand meets with. Now, no gammon! Don't look as if you couldn't see my meaning! No go, that, with an old bird like Miles Berrington. Frank, you must win back what, if I were a novelist, I should call your ancestral halls. Ay, and you can do it—if you will only play your cards well! All depends on that. But for one person, it would be ten to one on you. Who that person is, I daresay you can guess."

"My dear Mr. Berrington," said Frank, "your very rapid rush of words has rather taken me aback; still I won't

pretend ignorance of your meaning. You think I have a chance of marrying that charming girl, Miss Leadstone."

"Think! I know it! Look here! You've made the acquaintance of a remarkably romantic young lady under remarkably romantic circumstances. She likes you already. As for you yourself, why last evening you had so little hold of yourself, that if any young English fellows had been at at the Château, they would at once, in the vulgar slang of the day, have pronounced Frank Aylesmere to be 'spoons' on Juliana Leadstone."

"Good heavens! Did I so betray myself? I had not the remotest idea that any eyes were upon me."

"No eyes! Why, in the first place, Tom Leadstone himself has got the notion of this marriage into his head—Think of that, Frank!"

"Mr. Leadstone!"

"Ay, Mr. Leadstone. My old friend Tom is a good fellow in the main, and he—but don't let us waste words about him. Here's where the shoe pinches. Mrs. Leadstone is, and I fear always will be, dead against you. She wants her girl to marry rank—dreams of a coronet."

"A coronet! And I—Ha! ha! ha! It's too ludicrous. I—You know what I am, Mr. Berrington?"

"I know you're a devilish good-looking young fellow—the lineal representative of one of our oldest Middleshire families; and I believe, with all your follies, you've never committed an ungentlemanly action."

"Never, sir! and by God's help I never will!"

"That's right! Then, I say, with these qualities, and without one penny piece in your pocket, you're a fair and proper match for sweet Juliana Leadstone and her sixteen or seventeen—twenty for aught I know—thousand a year, and the home, which, but for poor Geoff's misconduct, would now be your own, to boot."

"You may say so, Mr. Berrington, but will the society in which Juliana moves say so?"

"You mean the society in which her mother is striving hard to make her move. Well, Frank, go on."

"What will that society say to the idea of her marrying—an actor?"

"Stuff and nonsense! Don't talk to me about actors. You're not an actor. You took to the stage as a mere freak. Something like a young spendthrift running away from home, and enlisting in a crack cavalry regiment. He's found out by his indignant and despairing relations, bought-off, and there's an end of it."

"'He jests at scars that never felt a wound.' Excuse my professional quotation. You can talk lightly of being without a penny piece in your pocket, who never knew what it was to be without a thousand pounds to answer your cheque. To feel as a man feels without said penny piece, you must be that man."

"I know this, Frank—such a situation, if I had ever been in it, would have so sharpened up my wits that I should pretty soon have found the means of getting freed from it. However, you are not even figuratively in this situation. On the contrary, you tell Leadstone you're making a good income, so all this is beside the real question, which I'll put to you in just a dozen words. Do you love Juliana well enough to ask her to marry you? There! Drink your glass of old Beaune, as I'm going to do mine, and then answer me—not as you would an ancient party of seventy-one, which I shall be next March, but as if I were of your own age, which I am, taken by the standard of my heart."

Both the glasses having been emptied, Frank said, "As you have put it, there is but one answer imaginable. I think her the most adorable creature I ever knew—I think the man who obtains her for his wife ought to have nothing left to desire on earth—but——"

"Oh, bother your buts! Leave them to me and your other friends. If I'm not mistaken, Mrs. Leadstone asked you to call at the Château R—— this morning?"

"She did."

"At what o'clock?"

"Between twelve and one."

"Naturally. Ha! ha! ha!—Do you suspect why she named that particular time?"

"I do. It's the usual hour of Miss Leadstone's morning walk——"

"With her maid—By the way, a Lentworth woman—

Charlotte Gibson—old tenants those Gibsons. She's a true Aylesmerite. Don't forget her—a very useful ally to have within the garrison. Besides her, there's Phibbs—all so many good cards in your hand. As for myself, I'm off to England this afternoon, but I shall think of you a good deal. No need for my saying there will always be a welcome for you at our little place—a mere box compared with Lentworth, as Tom Leadstone, or rather his wife has made it, only four miles off. By-the-bye, that jolly little Vicomte has promised to come and see us, to take part in *la chasse à Creessmass*. You might arrange to come at the same time."

This pretty well terminated the conversation, and Frank shortly afterwards quitted his kind friend and ally, going from the restaurant to his promised visit to Miss Plaistow.

In explanation of the zeal which the spinster appeared to throw into the cause already so well championed by Miles Berrington, it should be said that not only had she, as has been stated, lost a good deal of her former acerbity, under the genial influence of increased wealth, and was really anxious to serve the son of her old friend, but further, that, perceiving and understanding the motive of Mrs. Leadstone's hidden dislike to Frank, she was not unwilling to give the great lady of Lentworth a quiet stab in the dark for an object which she honestly believed to be a worthy one. No more need be related of Frank's interview with her than that the opinions she expressed and the counsels she gave were substantially those he had previously heard from Mr. Berrington during breakfast.

His visit to Mrs. Leadstone may be dismissed with almost equal brevity. That lady had so cleverly masked her domestic batteries as entirely to tranquillize her husband's fears on the subject of Frank. While she said nothing about his expected visit between twelve and one, she induced Mr. Leadstone to substitute himself for Gibson as Juliana's walking companion. Juliana knew no more than her father that Frank was coming, and aware of having mentioned to the latter her habitual walks, she went out happy in the hope of meeting him when the former was with her; for she had as quickly comprehended her father's approval, as she had her mother's disapproval, of the acquaintance recently formed.

Thus it happened that when, at about half-past twelve, Frank called at the Château R—— he found Mrs. Leadstone; in gorgeous matutinal attire, quite alone.

Forewarned, thanks to Miles Berrington and Miss Plaistow, he was forearmed against deception by the lady's blandishments.

The photographic views of Lentworth—the pretext of the visit—having been quickly disposed of, Mrs. Leadstone skillfully brought the conversation up to a point which justified her asking, "How long do you think of remaining here?"

"I regret," he answered, "that I'm hardly enough my own master to make a long stay. It's a pleasant place, this Boulogne, full of old associations for me."

"And of new ones also," thought Mrs. Leadstone, but she said tentatively, "I suppose you could hardly pledge yourself for any engagement so far as a week hence?"

"During only a few moments did he hesitate. How pleasant, he fancied, to enjoy for a whole week occasional glimpses of Juliana, with the prospect of some picnic or other agreeable party by way of climax. But a glance at Mrs. Leadstone's countenance sufficed to suggest the answer meet for the occasion.

It was this, "No, Mrs. Leadstone, I really don't think I can stay more than three days at the outside."

"Indeed! I'm so very sorry. However, that's the exact time Mr. Leadstone stays. You might arrange to go together. It will delight Mr. Leadstone."

A truly Machiavellian stroke of policy this seemed to her, by which she would rid herself at once of two rocks that stood in the way of her great scheme. She immediately added, her countenance beaming with a false radiance, "Pray let us see more of you while you are here. It gives my husband so much pleasure to renew his acquaintance with you. No doubt he'll appoint another day for our having the very great pleasure of your company to dinner. Good-bye, Mr. Aylesmere, good-bye—" for her visitor, perceiving he was no longer wanted, had risen to depart—"Many thanks for this kind visit. Good-bye."

"Good morning, Mrs. Leadstone," he responded, rather less spasmodically, "I'm sorry not to have met Mr. Leadstone. Pray give my compliments to him and Miss Leadstone."

Although Frank, warned as we have seen, was not to be deceived by these violent protestations, Tom Leadstone, unwarned, and steering but by his own general perception of his wife's character, took her at her word on one point, and did fix a day—that following Frank's morning call—for a second dinner at the Château R——. The guests were to be limited to Miss Plaistow, the Vicomte, and Frank. Miles Berrington, as we know, had left Boulogne. Of Mr. St. Ives no mention was made. Mr. Leadstone held him and his ecclesiastical pretensions in abhorrence. Juliana gave herself no thought about him, his only ally being Mrs. Leadstone, who imagined there was a savour of fashion in Ritualism and its fantastic fopperies. But as more serious business was now before her, she would not throw away the smallest chance by introducing an unpopular element into the party.

Mr. Leadstone and Frank having arrived at Boulogne on a Monday, the former had fixed the following Wednesday for this second dinner party, and announced his intention of returning to England the next day but one—Friday. Frank decided, in secret compliance with Mrs. Leadstone's hint, to leave at the same time. On Wednesday morning, however, a telegram from England reached the Château which necessitated Mr. Leadstone's departure as early as possible after its receipt. The steamer to Folkestone having already started, he elected to take the mail train to Calais, and cross over thence to Dover. This would occasion no further derangement in connection with the dinner party than the host's departure behind Mr. Holmes's quick pair of leaders at about twenty minutes to eleven p.m.

On this same Wednesday morning it occurred to Frank that, since he had, the previous day, been swindled—so to speak—out of a meeting with Juliana, he ought, if possible, to seek amends for his loss during the day, notwithstanding the forthcoming dinner at half-past seven. Accordingly, he took up his post, a little before noon, on the West pier, and walked up and down that structure till half-past one—the Château R—— luncheon hour, as he had heard.

This utterly infructuous vigil concluded, he hailed a boat, crossed the harbour to the opposite pier, and ordered his own

mid-day refection at the small restaurant Anglo-gallically designated *The Oysters-Park*.

Refreshed by this meal, he returned to the West pier. The sun was shining brightly, though in a not cloudless sky, and a smart breeze which had sprung up with the rising tide swept the sea into tiny waves. A couple of nautical *indigènes* were the only human beings visible on the pier. Following the seaward gaze of these men, he perceived that a large schooner yacht was tacking to and fro, as if to anchor beyond the Bar, the state of the tide not allowing her to enter the harbour. Addressing the men, he supposed she must be English, though she had not yet run up her colours. Oh, yes, the men told him, she was English—no doubt of that—couldn't come in for at least three hours, so she would probably send a boat ashore—with more information of that character.

He turned, and walked back, meeting a troop of fair-haired English children and nurses. Twice more he walked backwards and forwards, trying—but in vain—to interest himself in the manœuvres of the beautiful schooner. He looked at his watch half-a-dozen times in a quarter of an hour, fancying it must have stopped, so slowly did the time pass.

"What an idiot I am to expect her!" he thought, when he saw that the watch had travelled on to a quarter to three. "She has gone out with her mother, and I shan't meet her for—let me see—four hours and a half."

It was now three, he had given up all hope, and was on the point of once more hailing a ferry-boat in order to cross the harbour, when two female figures loomed in the distance at the town end. He had not yet acquired that lover's instinct—the result only of a certain duration of intimacy—which indicates at a glance the outline, the gait, the air of the beloved object; so it required the absolute arrival of these two females within a dozen yards of him to convince him that one of them was Juliana, the other—by inference—Charlotte Gibson.

Between the confusion wrought in his brain by recent conversations, counsels, and warnings, and the deep respect not unmingled with fear which as yet hedged round his new-born love for Juliana, the poor fellow was so utterly dumbfounded

that it became incumbent on Juliana herself first to utter the ordinary greeting.

Without attempting to practise any hypocrisy upon Gibson, she exclaimed, "I thought we should meet you, Mr. Aylesmere. I heard why you could not come yesterday. Here is somebody very anxious to see you. Gibson, look at Mr. Aylesmere—Mr. Francis, she calls you—There—should you remember him?—She has not seen you, Mr. Aylesmere, since she was—how old did you say, Gibson?"

"Twelve, miss. No, I certainly shouldn't ha' known Mr. Francis if I'd met him promiscuous—as they say in Middleshire—and that's what I told Mr. Phibbs o' Monday night!"

"Mr. Berrington mentioned Charlotte Gibson," said Frank. "Holmby Farm, wasn't it?"

"Yes, please sir. Father's dead, and mother too. Grandfather outlived 'em both, but, poor old man, he's quite bedridden. Master's very good to him—thanks to Miss Leadstone."

There was a strange blending of satisfaction and regret to Frank—and by sympathy to Juliana—in the Gibsonian reminiscences, so they let Miss Charlotte prattle on after this fashion till they reached the sea-end of the pier. The schooner yacht, which had by this time come to anchor, at once attracted Juliana's attention, and her proposal that they should sit down and watch her movements was gladly accepted by Frank.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHY is it that the sight of an English yacht in a foreign port never fails to arrest English eyes, and make English hearts beat with honest pride?

I suppose it is that the beautiful piece of marine handicraft is at once typical of England's might through her dominion over the ocean, and explanatory of the inner causes of that

dominion. Other countries can possess navies, construct ships, train sailors, but no other country possesses a yacht fleet; no other country makes a national sport of braving the dangers of the sea; no other country owns a naval school voluntarily and sumptuously supported by its longest purses, its best blood, its bravest spirits.

Whatever may have been the thoughts of our trio, respectively, at the sight of the schooner yacht they were watching, anchored on the now motionless waters, nothing of the above nature was said among them. It was, of course, Charlotte Gibson's place—her Lentworth reminiscences exhausted—to observe a discreet silence, as well as to keep at a discreet distance from her young lady and the young gentleman to whom her vivid imagination had already assigned the character of her young lady's favoured admirer.

Juliana, though other subjects of conversation were not wanting, commenced by the relation of the change which had come over Mr. Leadstone's plans—the telegram—his intended departure by night train to Calais—and so forth, winding up by the question: "My mother told me you had settled to leave with my father. *Must* you also go by the same train?"

It occurred to Frank that Juliana might with more exactitude have said, "My mother told me *she* had settled that *you* should leave &c., &c.," and at a later period of his acquaintance with the fair girl, no doubt he would have said so. Under existing circumstances, his chief thought was to shape his answer to her question in the mode manifestly most pleasing to her, so he replied, "There is not the least necessity for my leaving before Friday. I don't suppose Mr. Leadstone will suggest my going merely because he is going."

"No," Juliana said, promptly and pointedly, "but somebody else may!"

Before Frank could express his ready apprehension of her meaning, a third nautical personage, who had issued, telescope in hand, from the flag-tower close by, drew near, and saying, "Yacht Anglais — Will Mademoiselle look?" gallantly handed his telescope to Juliana.

Frank, after sundry modifications, arranged it to her sight, and placed himself, of course looking at and not from her, so that his shoulder might afford a rest.

"I see perfectly," she said. "I can almost read the name on the sailors' hats. It begins with an M-i;" after which she returned the telescope to its owner.

The yacht's gig was now being lowered and manned. Presently three persons, apparently the owner and his friends, stepped into it, as if to come ashore.

"I think, Mr. Aylesmere, we've seen enough, and I wish to be at home by half-past four," Juliana said, rising. "Perhaps you'll walk with us to the carriage, which we left waiting at the inner dock—Ah! very beautiful, is it not?"

This last, on observing that Frank remained gazing at the distant view: the sea—of varied hue, as its ripples here danced in the sunshine, there darkened under a passing cloud; the scattered fishing boats, which, now that the light breeze had died away, lay to lazily with flapping sails; on the right and left respectively, the heights of Grisnez and Alpreck; on the horizon, more dimly seen, the cliffs of the English coast.

"The sea is always beautiful," Frank replied, turning at the sound of her voice. "When I see it tranquil and sunlit, I think I like it best; then again, when driven by the wind into wild waves, I fancy I prefer that aspect."

"There has been some rough weather," Juliana remarked, "since we came; but I confess I never can look upon a stormy sea without thinking of the havoc it is somewhere working, the widows and orphans it may be making, at that very moment."

"I suppose, Miss Leadstone, mine is the poetic, yours the realistic view of the question. Certainly, yours is the true woman's appreciation."

The brief delay occasioned by these remarks had allowed time for the yacht's gig, vigorously pulled by its stalwart crew, to cross the bar, and it was now entering the harbour.

Juliana's countenance was towards it, as was Gibson's. Frank had already made some steps onwards, and consequently could not see, as did the two females, that he of the three gentlemen who was steering, after having looked for a few moments fixedly at Juliana, spoke to the others, then, standing up, took off his hat to her.

"Who can that be?" Juliana asked of Gibson.

The handmaiden, with a gesture of impatience, whispered

to her young lady something which made the latter start and turn very pale.

Having taken another rapid look at the boat, Juliana said, in a low tone, "You are right. Of course, he'll call at the Château. I do hope it won't be before dinner."

After a few moments of reflection, and with a slight hesitation of manner, Juliana said to Frank, "Pray don't think me changeable if I ask you to go on alone. I—I would rather rest a little longer."

Frank looked surprised, but before he had time to speak, Juliana resumed, "I will tell you plainly that, on reflection, I should prefer your *not* walking to the carriage with us."

"I'll do whatever you wish," Frank said, perceiving that her words were spoken with a distinct purpose.

"Thank you, Mr. Aylesmere. It's very kind of you. Good-bye. I'm sorry to part thus. But we shall meet again so very soon."

When Frank took her extended hand, it was trembling perceptibly, but the gentle pressure it returned to his proved that, whatever the meaning of this sudden change of purpose, it arose out of no displeasure against himself.

Meantime the yacht's gig was speeding on, and by the time Frank reached the town end of the pier, he could see that it had been hailed by the harbour officials, with whom its owner was now in parley. He also remarked that the crew bore on their hats the word "Miranda."

Having no particular object in hastening on, he paused opposite the point at which the boat lay to. The three yachting men were of thoroughly aristocratic appearance. Two of them appeared of middle age, the third several years younger. This latter gave a start when his eye fell upon Frank, a start—though Frank knew it not—of recognition. He it was, in fact, who had bowed to Juliana, and he now remembered having, while so doing, seen Frank in her company.

At first he seemed disposed to speak, but perceiving that Frank looked at him with blank indifference, he turned away and entered into conversation with his friends. Frank had sauntered on, when the sound of voices—plainly English—speaking very mediocre French, caused him to stop and look

round once more. The younger of the three had left the boat, and was scrambling up some rough stone steps slippery with wet sea-weed, assisted by a boat-hook held out to him from above by a French fisherman. Having reached the top, he said, in a somewhat drawling voice, to his friends in the boat, "You'll take my room, you know, and all that—but don't rely on me for dinner. Of course I dress and all that at the Bains. As to dining I may or may not. Don't rely on your humble servant. You know the sort of thing!"

"All right, young 'un, all right," replied one of the two, lighting a cigar; "we've learnt to take care of ourselves. Believe you're up to ditto."

"And I say, Claude," added the other, who now held the rudder, and who was, in fact, the owner of the "*Miranda*," "mind you don't hurry yourself on your way down"—indicating with one hand the seaward end of the pier—"Quickened action of the heart thought dangerous by the faculty—know the sort of thing myself, you know. Had it once—all over now though. Ta, ta! Now then, my lads, pull away!"

And as the gig shot rapidly across the harbour, the younger man, addressed as Claude—in whom the reader has recognised the Honourable Mr. Cotherstone—waved his hand to it, turned down the pier, and commenced walking rapidly, and not without a certain confident swagger, in the direction whence Frank had just come.

Aware that, excepting by Juliana and her maid, the pier was deserted—for the nurses and their young charges had long since quitted it—Frank's natural reflection was that this Mr. Claude either was going for the express purpose of meeting Juliana and Gibson, or necessarily would meet them. And forthwith a feeling, which really was neither more nor less than nascent jealousy, prompted him to remain, and take up a post of observation on the movements of the said Mr. Claude behind a small wooden tool-house standing nearly midway in the approach to the pier. Here, without being seen himself, he was able to command the entire pier from end to end.

But there was no necessity for this long range of sight. Juliana and Gibson were by this time walking homeward, and had, indeed, already traversed half the pier.

Mr. Claude, the while, was approaching them, to all appearance more rapidly than his facetious friend in the boat would have considered good for his heart. Another half minute and he had met Juliana and Gibson.

Could it be possible? Yes. Confound the fellow! Shaking hands with Juliana! Evidently upon intimate terms! Now turning and walking by her side. Gibson, too, falling back, which he remembered she had *not* done when he himself was walking by the side of her young lady. The devil take Mr. Claude! But Juliana herself! What could it all mean? Here a handsome, highly-bred looking young fellow arrives, probably from Cowes, in a yacht, jumps ashore, having, no doubt, seen Juliana walking on the pier as he entered the harbour, and in two minutes is on intimate terms—very likely engaged in a renewal of former intimate terms—with whom? Why, with the chosen of Frank's own heart, as (within something under a fortnight) he had learnt to consider her, and moreover to imagine that she has given him warranty for such belief. Well, never mind! He is to dine in her company—perhaps may enjoy the happiness of sitting next to her—in two or three hours, and he will, gently, of course, ask her for an explanation of what has so greatly surprised him. Stop a bit! Explanation! Explanation—Ludicrous! What right has he to ask an explanation of any single one of her actions? This Mr. Claude—and be hanged to him!—is clearly some friend of long standing. He may be a cousin. But, no! The fellow looks too thorough-bred for that. Then, still worse, an admirer—one of her admirers—for such a girl, with such a fortune, must be surrounded by admirers, and this confounded fellow seems just the sort of man that women (as all experience shows) rarely fail to be taken by; exceptionally good looking—thinking not a little of himself—cool as a cucumber; one of the *audaces* whom *fortuna* is never weary of assisting. And all this while who and what is he—Frank? Why, a dispossessed gentleman—not even a gentleman, according to the verdict of "Society," because he is an actor! And then—the social question apart—what *is* an actor, even if never so successful a one; a plaything of the fickle public, to be petted, applauded, followed for a few prosperous years, then neglected for some

new favourite—flung aside—left to die, as hundreds of them have died, in a hospital or a workhouse!

But while Frank's over excited imagination is torturing the poor fellow by summoning up these exaggerated pictures, the persons to whom all the mental commotion is due are coming so near him that the wooden shed, behind which he stands, will speedily cease to screen him from their sight.

He perceives the absolute necessity for beating a retreat, to avoid being caught sneaking off. Yes, he must get out of Mr. Claude's way unless he would expose himself to Juliana in the ridiculous and contemptible light of one playing the spy on her actions. Forthwith, then, contriving, to the best of his ability, to keep the shed between himself and the approaching party, he walks toward the town at a pace that he is forced to confess to himself savours strongly of running away!

CHAPTER XVII.

THE porter of the Hotel des Bains had fetched from the nearest stand the "trappe" (in the Vicomte's own Anglo-gallic phraseology) which was to convey Frank and himself to the dinner at the Château R——, a humble vehicle enough, open but for a dirty and tattered leather curtain suspended from a light iron frame-work running round the top, drawn by an aged chesnut horse with very thoroughbred points, but legs prayerfully disposed, and knees in a sadly dilapidated condition. As the two friends issued from the gate into the Rue de l'Ecu, where their "trappe" awaited them, they observed that one of the smart carriages belonging to the hotel—a closed pair-horse landau, attended by a valet de place, was leaving the hotel by the opposite gate which faces the harbour. Shortly afterwards, when they had nearly cleared the town, a bend in the road showed them the identical carriage, a good deal ahead, but taking the same direction as their own. Presently a sharp ascent caused the distance between these two vehicles to increase greatly in favour of the landau, which ultimately disappeared entirely.

Mrs. Leadstone had imported from England one objectionable practice, that, namely, of not introducing to one another those who met at her house. Her theory was apparently that expounded by Mr. Thomas Tring,* namely, that "people who know one another don't want to be introduced—people who don't know one another mayn't like it." The consequence of this, on the present occasion, was that the Vicomte and Frank Aylesmere were deprived of the advantage of learning that the handsome, full-framed, long-whiskered, highly-dressed gentleman—doubtless the late occupant of the private hotel carriage already mentioned—whom, on entering the drawing-room, they found in easy and amicable converse with the daughter of the house, and who looked rather superciliously, and who-the-devil-may-you-beishly at them through his absurd single eyeglass, was the Hon. Claude Cotherstone, second son of &c., &c., &c.

Frank instantly recognised him to the extent of the "Claude," and he did so with an unpleasant sinking of the heart, followed by an insane desire to ask him (Claude) what the—something he meant by staring at him (Frank) in that—

The complement of his maledictory imaginings died away before the beaming look by which Juliana pointedly summoned him to her side.

His instant obedience to that silent command became the signal for the Hon. Claude's no less rapid retreat to another corner of the room.

Mr. Cotherstone had recognised Frank personally, and desired to find out from Mrs. Leadstone who the young fellow, with so much self-possession and quiet good style about him, was.

The reply to his question was ready cut and dried, and ran thus; "Oh! he's a young man of good family, rather patronised by Mr. Leadstone. His people went, in the popular phrase, to the dogs, long ago. He's something in some public office—a very meritorious person, Mr. Leadstone tells me he is. I myself know very little about him. Mr. Leadstone says he's here on a sort of holiday trip. These young

* In the Ringwoods of Ringwood.

men, I believe, get holidays in public offices, as schoolboys do."

"Holidays! Aw—of course—Oh yes!—holidays—of course—quite so. Then he's here on a holiday trip, eh? Do you know it—Aw—strikes me Miss Leadstone is—Aw—interested in him as well as Mr. Leadstone, for, if I'm not mistaken, I saw him walking by her side, on the pier, this afternoon."

"Quite right, Mr. Cotherstone, you did see him walking with Juliana."

"Ah! I thought I couldn't be mistaken. He's—Aw—one of those men one remembers, you know."

"He is so, Mr. Cotherstone—a striking young man."

You see, Juliana, not choosing to be informed against by Mr. Claude, during the visit he told her he should that afternoon make at the Château R——, had, on reaching home, told both her father and her mother how Mr. Aylesmere had met and accompanied herself and Gibson.

"Yes," Mrs. Leadstone resumed, "Juliana thinks him clever—as he certainly is. You know Juliana's education has been such as to enable her to appreciate well read men."

"Oh! quite natural and proper—Aw—I'm afraid my reading isn't likely to recommend me to Miss—to—Aw—your charming daughter. Fact is, fellows do read awfully now."

"Yes, it's an educated age," Mrs. Leadstone remarked drily, adding to herself, "I wish he would not use, or rather misuse, that word *awfully*. I'm always at Juliana about it. She'll not fail to put it down as a black mark against him."

Claude's thoughts were running the while not very satisfactorily, thus: "Confound the very meritorious young man's reading, if it gets sparks out of her fine eyes like those she's now darting at him! She never answered with anything approaching to them even to my spooniest compliments."

Mrs. Leadstone detected in his countenance, hideously screwed up as it was by the effort needed to retain his eye-glass *en position*, the nature of these thoughts, and, as if to soothe them, she observed, "But after all, though books are very well in their way, there is no teaching like that of life itself. What is it the poet says about the true study of mankind being man himself? Young as you are, your experiences are worth a whole library in themselves."

"My experiences! Just so—Aw—my experiences—Ahem!" and he turned away his head to conceal an irrepressible smile at the consummate *bêtise* uttered by Mrs. Leadstone; for verily the experiences of men of the Claude Cotherstone stamp are not of the sort to recommend themselves to pure-hearted, high-minded young wives.

Of course Mrs. Leadstone knew this as well as the Honourable Claude himself, albeit, with the fatal purblindness which occasionally afflicts even better mothers than it was ever in her nature to be, she could see in this young man nothing but the second brother of the childless Viscount Windlesham, and consequently the heir presumptive to the Earldom of Battleborough!

But Phibbs' announcement of dinner gave Claude the opportunity to lightly turn the lady's observation with—"On one subject, at any rate, you may trust to my experience—that is cookery. Am I to have the honour?" offering the arm which he saw Mrs. Leadstone was expecting.

"Thank you, Mr. Cotherstone, and as you'll have Juliana on one side of you, just let me give you a hint. You're fond of quizzing—chaffing in modern *argot*. Don't chaff her about—you know the individual I mean—but look upon him with kindly toleration. Consider him as—well, let us say—her literary pet; anyhow, better than a pug or a poodle."

"Pet, eh? Early to begin with pets, canine or human. By-the-bye, you must tell me who your little Frenchman is. Seems very good form. Fancy I've met him in Paris."

As Mrs. Leadstone had predicted, Juliana sat next to Claude, the Vicomte being on her other hand. Frank had—with a view to his own ultimate interests—been appropriated by Miss Plaistow, and was held in bondage between herself and the lady of the house.

The smallness of the party being destructive of confidential conversation, the spinster could only say to Frank, in a moment during which she pretended to be occupied in defending her train against the incursions of his chair's legs "Take care not to let anybody see how disappointed you are at not being next to Juliana!"

"*Le sage entend à demi mot*," Frank whispered in reply.

The conversation during dinner was chiefly maintained by

the new guest and the Vicomte, whom nobody, however loquacious, had ever yet been known to silence altogether. Claude Cotherstone was a cheery and amusing companion. As regarded his own country, and more particularly his own metropolis, he knew everything that was doing, and everybody who was doing anything worth knowing; while, though shallow and superficial, he was ready to talk, against all comers, on all possible subjects. Due allowance being made for what De Foix would have called a *soupçon de morgue Britannique* and insular self-sufficiency, he was as sociable and *insouciant* as the Vicomte himself. However false and specious might be the basis of his character, he yet enjoyed a certain popularity in his own set, imposing on men by the never-failing aplomb which he shared with his great aunt, and influencing women—the women, be it understood, of his own world—by his unscrupulous mendacity. Our little Vicomte, whose great knowledge of human nature seldom had fair play under the pressure of his rabid Anglomania, rang all the changes of his laudatory vocabulary upon him. He was *un homme du meilleur monde*, presenting the truest aristocratic type. He was *au courant* of all that went on in the highest society. He was this, that, and the other. In short, he imposed on the Vicomte de Foix as he did on others, even, though in a restricted sense, on Mrs. Leadstone's husband—observe the distinctive expression—Mrs. Leadstone's husband! For Mrs. Leadstone's husband, like the husbands of better, as of worse women, had, after twenty odd years of matrimony, arrived at the stage of doing, saying, perhaps unconsciously thinking many things which Tom Leadstone would not, of his own initiative, do, or say, or think.

Thus it had come to pass that Mr. Leadstone had, in principle, accepted, without much questioning, this same Cotherstone connection, whereto his wife, at once Oglethorpe-ridden and coronet-seeking, held with such tenacity; and there was every reason to suppose that, but for the recent appearance of Frank Aylesmere on the scene, he would, in the end, have been bored, or worried, or be-scened into openly arraying his forces on his wife's side. But Frank Aylesmere *had* appeared on the scene, and—how or why Tom Leadstone hardly knew—the notion of marrying his darling daughter

and heiress to that young gentleman had, in a misty and indefinite manner, taken possession of his not very imaginative brain. We know he was in complete ignorance of the manœuvres practised between the dowager and his wife in the Cotherstone interest, insomuch that he might have overheard the following account, as poured by Claude into Mrs. Leadstone's ear, of his unexpected appearance at Boulogne, without in the least comprehending those little allusions which to Mrs. Leadstone were perfectly intelligible.

"Surprised, are you, my dear Mrs. Leadstone? So am I myself—Aw—and Auntie Og——" (his irreverent rendering of Aunt Oglethorpe), "will be still more so when she—Well, never mind about her. You see I've been trying to set my horses' heads with hers. Old lady wrote word she—Aw—wanted change of air. Strikes me she blooms equally in every sort of air! Wouldn't have that repeated, you know, to an ancient relative with Forty-five Thou. at her disposal. However, she said she must have sea air, and would I manage to give her a meeting at Boulogne? Named Boulogne because you and—Aw—*yours* are located here. I see you shrink at the Americanism. Strict grammarians, as a body, object to Americanisms. Pray consider it unsaid. Well, I wrote how pleased I should be, only she must remember my—Aw—my Yorkshire autumn engagements"—the euphemism by which he thought it prudent, in addressing his mother-in-law *in passe*, to express Doncaster Races!—"Well, last Monday my brother—Windlesham, you know—telegraphed to me in London to go down to Cowes. A good party there. Regatta, and all that sort of thing. Down I went Tuesday. Win had a stroke of luck—won the cup. That opened his heart—thing not easily done, I promise you! So Win says to me, 'Young'un'—calls me young'un, you know!—'tell you what I'll do for you,' he says. 'I'll run you across to Boulogne—give you twenty-four hours.' 'Only twenty-four hours, Win!' I said. 'What on earth can a fellow do in twenty-four hours? Say forty-eight, and I'll be ever so grateful.' Win growled a bit, but in the end he agreed to the forty-eight. So, you see, for forty-eight hours, here I am."

CHAPTER XVIII.

YES, "here" the Honourable Claude Cotherstone was, to the dismay of five out of the party now assembled, and the bewilderment of the sixth.

Mr. Leadstone reflected, with no little alarm, that although ere the lapse of forty-eight hours her husband would, yet this troublesome young Aylesmere would not, have quitted Boulogne.

Mr. Leadstone and Miss Plaistow were, without any inter-communication of sentiments, equally concerned from their point of view at an arrival which could not fail to increase Mrs. Leadstone's animosity against Frank.

Juliana regretted a presence which shattered at a blow the little romance she had constructed on the assumption of uninterrupted intercourse with its hero during the remainder of his stay.

Frank felt oppressed by a vague sense of danger in Mr. Cotherstone's vicinity, although unaware of the real and very serious character of that danger.

The Vicomte, without sharing any of the above-mentioned apprehensions, was conscious of a certain air of restraint which seemed to oppress all present who had been known to him before this latest addition to the Château circle.

Alone to Claude Cotherstone himself was his arrival at Boulogne the source of unmixed gratulation. As was natural, he judged matters from the surface, being without the means of penetrating the depths beneath. That surface could not have been of more unruffled smoothness had a conspiracy been actually formed, at once by friend and foes, to lull him into a false security.

Practically, indeed, such a conspiracy might be said to have existed against him.

It was not to be supposed that Mrs. Leadstone would gratuitously indicate to him difficulties which she felt well assured of being able to vanquish in the long run.

Juliana, taught art in a small degree by the art she saw her mother so largely practising—fatal lesson of parent to child—was enabled to keep such a strong control over herself during

the entire evening that not only did Claude fatuously believe himself the monopoliser of her attention, but poor Frank absolutely longed for the hour of departure, when he might be freed from the spectacle of such monopoly. Withal, he himself played admirably up to the situation, talking and laughing now with Miss Plaistow, now with Mrs. Leadstone, as brightly and smartly as if he were taking a part in a scene of high comedy before a critical audience. Then too Mrs. Leadstone's ingenious story about him had thrown sufficient dust into Claude's eyes to make the "meritorious young man" (whose name, by-the-bye, he had not taken the trouble to learn) rather than otherwise an object of interest in those eyes.

"One might be able to do something for the—Aw—young fellow, Mrs. Leadstone. Brother got good interest, and all that. Well in with Government—You know the sort of thing. Only you see, Mrs. Leadstone, Win's a fellow who never does anything for another fellow unless he can get something in return. But of course this reading young man can write—do newspaper work—sort of *quid pro quo* to Government. You must get hold of Win and talk to him about it."

Mr. Leadstone understood Juliana, and guessed Frank, sufficiently to read pretty accurately the nature of their respective thoughts, and more than once went the length of winking his conviction as to the state of affairs in Miss Plaistow's direction, she responding with looks full of appreciative intelligence.

To all this must be added the fact that the Honourable Claude, *more suo*, imbibed, during dinner, more of Mr. Leadstone's good and various wines than his brain was competent to bear, and was consequently not in a condition favourable for the nice observation of surrounding appearances.

Mr. Leadstone's departure to the railway station became the signal for a general dispersion.

Frank's parting with Juliana, occurring, as it did, within the double ken of Mrs. Leadstone and Mr. Cotherstone, was unmarked by the smallest emotion. Neither Mrs. Leadstone nor Mr. Cotherstone, however, knew that a quarter of an hour previously Juliana had, under the pretext of asking Frank to aid her in searching for "Les Roses" set of waltzes, whispered to him, "I owe you an explanation; I shall walk out to-

morrow, either morning or afternoon," and that Frank had contrived not only to press her hand in token of comprehension, but had seized upon a glove which she was in the act of taking off, and had larceniously conveyed the same to his pocket.

En revanche, it has to be recorded that Mrs. Leadstone, more than a quarter of an hour before that same incident, had, behind the leaves of the book of Lentworth photographs, whispered to Claude, "I'll ask you to be good enough to engage a box for the opera to-morrow night, in my name. Of course you'll join us—and please not a word of it to anybody here!"

And so it will be easily understood that the Honourable Mr. Cotherstone went forth from the Château R—— completely in the mental condition known as the Fool's Paradise.

Probably there will be no better mode of conveying to the apprehension of the reader what was the impression left on Claude's mind by the events of the evening than to relate the conversation he held with his brother, Lord Windlesham, the following morning, as they sat at breakfast in the public *salle-à-manger* of the Hotel des Bains—his lordship declining to incur the expense of a private sitting-room.

And first a few words touching this same lord. He was between fifteen and sixteen years older than Claude, the latter being, in fact, only his half-brother. A handsome, hirsute, massive, sixteen-stone man, big-boned, as was Claude, and fleshy, as Claude was in a fair way to become hereafter. He was as careful and economical as Claude was lavish and reckless, in money matters. Of the eight thousand a year to which the allowance he received from the Earl his father, and his wife's fortune together amounted, he scarcely spent four. He said the family had been going too fast for the last three generations, and he meant to pull up short, so as, if possible, to set the family property straight. The principle was commendable, but he carried it to excess, the more so that, although Lord Battleborough had lived somewhat largely, had been on the turf, and had contested a couple of county elections, his first Countess (Windlesham's mother) had brought him a considerable fortune. Viscount Windlesham, in short, could not have been more thrifty;

business-like, and systematic if he had begun life by sweeping a counting-house, been elevated to a stool in the same, and then crept up to wealth by hard and continuous labour.

"Well, young 'un," my lord began, "how did you get on last night?"

"Oh, first-rate, Win! I think—Aw—I shall pull the great event off next season."

"Do you, really?"

"Do, by George!"

"Got all the family for you, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes. That's a matter of course."

"And the fair one herself?"

"Well, Win, she's—Aw—a shy sort of filly. Wants very—Aw—gentle handling. You know the sort."

"Perfectly, Claude, perfectly. To bring one of that sort to the post you'll require lots of patience and temper. I think your temper's about right. You're cool enough, young 'un—hand and head—that's the result of *my* observation of you."

"Oh, cool, I believe you! Wonderful how keeping a betting book on the principal events does make one keep one's head cool."

"The devil take your betting book, Claude! I wish to goodness you'd give it up. Your head is screwed the right way on your shoulders, and might be turned to a deuced deal better account than it now is. As to this betting work, you ought to follow the Earl's example."

"Oh! But you know the Earl left the turf because he lost money. I stick to it because I—Aw—make money."

Lord Windlesham shrugged his shoulders scornfully, but said nothing.

"You know I do," Claude resumed. "I'm over Five Thou. on the right side from last Derby—that is, if I—Aw—get it all paid."

"If, indeed! Ha! ha! ha! I showed your list of names to Jack Duberly."

"Well, what does Jack say to it? I look on Jack as an authority in the line of names."

"He says you may write off just one half the money—fifty per cent was his expression—as worth that, and no more!" snapping his thumb and finger in the air.

"No, really!"

"It strikes me, Claude, the best thing you can do will be to place the matter in Jack's hands, and give him a commission—say ten per cent.—on all he gets in for you. I'm quite serious." As he gave utterance to this Copthall Court suggestion the Viscount rubbed his hands gleefully together.

"Capital business notion of yours, Win!" cried Claude. "I'll speak to Jack about it this very day. He's just the sort of man to stir those fellows up, for a commission. But talking of commission, I've got one from Mamma Leadstone—not a big one, but one perhaps big with coming events. It's just] to engage a box for her and the fair Juliana at the theatre to-night. And, Win, an idea strikes me about that—why shouldn't you come with me and have a look at——"

"My future sister-in-law, eh? I'm game to do that same, Claude. I'll give you and Jack a dinner—a quiet one—(Mr. Jack Duberly was the third in the yachting party) and we'll go afterwards. Dine early and—Ahem! No Champagne, mind that! keep your head cool for the occasion!"

Claude made a wry face. He liked his Roederer and his Moët, and he knew that the pretext put forth of keeping his head cool meant keeping the cost of the Champagne in Win's pocket.

"And I say," Win continued, "now we're alone, I'll do a bit of sermonising. If you should have what I may call the supreme good fortune to pull off this matrimonial affair, I do hope you'll cut the turf. Take the step at thirty-one which the Earl did at sixty-one. Instead of a betting-book, study blue-books. Fill that seat in the House of Commons which we've got open for you. Then again"—with a little hesitation—"there's the—the little business of the—Ahem! Drury Lane beauty."

"Ah! Well?" Claude said, looking surprised, and not very well pleased,

"Of course you—you mean to drop *that*. I must tell you Jack Duberly is very well acquainted with Miles Berrington, your heiress' god-father, and Jack says plainly they're not by any means a lot to stand any nonsense of that sort."

"Jack Duberly be——"

"Ah! its all very well to Pooh—pooh Jack Duberly and his advice. But just listen to me, Claude! There's no denying the fact that middle class people, of whatever stratum, in their own pure breed have higher notions of morality than we have. When they become crossed with us, I wont say how it may be. So you must not imagine that if you marry Miss Leadstone you'll be able to take your fling as you might, if you married Lady Constantia Carmine, or Ethelburga Topcourt, or others, easily guessed at, of the easy going, French novel reading sort, ready to accept the reciprocity principle in matters matrimonial."

"Oh! of course, Win," Claude answered, at once sulkily and uneasily, "I'm prepared for it all—I see the whole vista before me—No use bothering one's self about it till the time comes."

"And when the time comes, you'll——"

"I shall drop the—the connection you refer to, at least for a while."

"At least for a while! Do you mean that you have any sort of mental reserve on the subject?"

"Hang it, Win! one could think you were a Q.C. with a witness in the box under cross-examination." Lord Windlesham continued warmly, without noticing his brother's bantering observation, "Because, Claude, if you have such a mental reserve, old Leadstone, or Berrington, or some of them ought to be warned of it. Bless me if they ought not! Don't frown at me, young'un! And the girl's father, if he did what he ought to do in the matter of settlement, would tie up every pound sterling so tightly that your wife's signature would be required to—to enable you to pay for a new set of shirts, or settle a tailor's bill. You may think I'm chaffing, Claude, but upon my soul I'm speaking my honest sentiments."

"Thank you at least, Winny, dear boy, for warning me of your sentiments. If the marriage does come off, be sure—Aw—I won't ask you to—Aw—instruct the family lawyers in drawing up the settlements."

"Don't, Claude, unless you intend me to do my duty."

So you see that, with all his shabbiness on certain points, Viscount Windlesham had the heart of an upright, honest

man, and was many, very many degrees above his younger brother in the scale of moral rectitude.

"Come, Winny," said the younger brother, "don't be hard upon me. If once I marry Juliana, and bring that fine Lentworth property into the family, there's no saying what a model paterfamilias I may become."

"I trust in Heaven you will, young 'un. But on my honour I doubt it. I'm afraid, Claude, it isn't in you. I'm sorry to think as I do of you, for I should like to see you with a home which *is* a home, and children running about your knees. You know why, Claude—you know why!"

Yes, Claude did "know why." His elder brother, who had just uttered these pathetic words, with an emotion he rarely exhibited, was childless, there being little present prospect of that condition ceasing to exist. But Claude was not the man to enter into his brother's sorrow—the skeleton in his family closet—because he knew how greatly, in the trafficking world wherein they both lived, his own personal market value as a marrying man was enhanced by his brother's household solitariness.

(To be continued).

SONNET.

SWEET rose, that smells of June in wintry days,
 How hast thou kept the fragrance of the past !
 For in this blossom now, the fairest, last,
 That shall this year emprison the sun's deep rays,
 We breathe the scent, we on the beauty gaze
 Which summer's early dawn had o'er thee cast,
 And thou e'er since hast held enclosed fast,
 Till now thy parting bloom the charm displays.
 Ah, lovely rose ! how great a space doth lie
 Betwixt those shinings days of early prime
 And these, when e'en thy perfume seems a sigh,
 Of nature's minor chord, the echoing chime !
 'Tis love alone can backward lean and cry,
 "Bright days, tho' past, on those to come yet shine."

L. LAWRENSON.



ST. DAVID AND THE WELSH.

BY BENJAMIN WHITEHEAD, B.A.

ALTHOUGH so many ancient customs are dying out, there are, even in the present century, still people to be met with on the first of March wearing in their hats a real or imitation leek. These persons, it is unnecessary to add, are patriotic Welshmen, who avail themselves of this method (rather an inconvenient one, it must be owned) of showing in a foreign land their love of country and respect for the memory of their patron saint, David. This custom seems, in times gone by, to have excited the ridicule of Englishmen in an unnecessary degree, let us hope more on account of the unsightly and ludicrous appearance of the vegetable in question, than for any desire to laugh poor Taffy out of the observance of a custom which does him credit. For it is well described by Shakespeare as "an ancient tradition, begun upon an honourable respect, and worn as a memorable trophy of predeceased valour." The play from which this passage is taken is well known to readers of Shakespeare, and it is to be hoped that every bully who in a similar manner tells a Welshman that he will

"———knock his leek about his pate
Upon Saint Davy's Day"

may meet with similar punishment and find his leek equally hard to digest. The origin of this custom is, of course, attributed to St. David, who, if tradition speak truly, was no less a valiant general than a saintly priest. It is said, that on the occasion of a battle, probably on the first of March, he made each of his soldiers wear a leek in his hat, as a distinctive badge.

But, whatever may have been the fame of St. David as a

warrior, his chief claim to a niche in the Temple of Fame is based upon the fact of his having founded and given his name to the city and see of St. David's. This city (I suppose it is entitled to the name, as it contains a cathedral) is situated, as most people know, at the extreme end of Pembrokeshire, close to St. David's Head, the Land's End of Wales. Situated as it is, out of the main line of railway, which runs along the other side of St. Bride's Bay to Milford, it is a place rather difficult of access, so that it is not surprising that the great majority of visitors to Wales, if asked whether they visited St. David's, would be unable to reply in the affirmative. And I very strongly suspect, from the number of people I had to ask, before I could find a person who could give any information as to reaching St. David's, that the Welshmen who make a pilgrimage to the shrine of their patron saint are still fewer in number. Not as it was in the days of Pope Calixtus, who declared two journeys to St. David's equal to one to Rome, or, as it is put by a somewhat irreverent Welsh bard :—

“Would haughty Popes your senses bubble,
And once to Rome your steps entice,
'Tis quite as well and saves some trouble,
To visit old Saint Taffy twice.”

That may be so for a Welshman, or even for an Englishman in Roman Catholic times ; but the pilgrim of the present day, who loves to rush about in express trains, is likely to find two pilgrimages to St. David's no easy substitute for one to Rome.

For after several hours in the train he is landed at Haverfordwest, sixteen miles from his destination, and in total ignorance as to how he is to get over them, for on this point no satisfactory information can be previously obtained. It is, as I said before, difficult, even in Wales, to find a person who has made the journey ; and when you have found him, all he will be able to tell you is that there are sixteen miles to traverse, which, on account of the hilly nature of the road, are equal to twenty-five ordinary miles. He will also inform you that there is a coach, but how often, and at what times it runs, is a mystery which he most probably will be unable to

solve. So on alighting from the train the pilgrim will most likely find that it is not coach-day, as that conveyance runs but twice a week. The mail cart is now allowed to take passengers, but that, of course, will have started long before his arrival. On discovering this, the first thought of the pilgrim will doubtless be on the strange mutability of human affairs—that a city which contains the largest cathedral in Wales, and the shrine of St. David, at which kings and nobles, in days gone by, were proud to do homage—that this city, once, as we are told, so flourishing and prosperous, should have sunk so low as not to be able to support a daily coach. After these sage reflections he will look about for some other means of conveyance. A country waggon, should there be one going, may perhaps answer his purpose if he has no objection to being bumped about in it for half the day; or if money be no object, he can hire a vehicle of some description, and be whirled over the intervening space at the magnificent speed of four miles an hour, except at the hills, where he will be politely requested to *get out and walk up*. This appears to be a favourite practice with Keltic Jehus, for I remember once in the Isle of Man all the inside passengers of a coach being turned out in the rain, and compelled to walk up a hill. Being already wet through, we were in a position to be amused at the disgust of our fellow travellers.

But if the day be fine, and the pilgrim a good pedestrian, he will scorn such modes of conveyance, and, trusting to his own stout legs, will keep, at the same time, his money and his temper. Before starting, however, he will find that it will repay him to take a turn round the picturesque old town of Haverfordwest. Like nearly every town of importance along the south coast of Wales, it possesses a castle, formerly the stronghold of foreign conquerors, but now converted into a gaol.

Starting off, then, on his long walk, the pilgrim will find himself, as he passes through the villages, “the cynosure of neighbouring eyes,” and may possibly derive some satisfaction from the fact that he is evidently creating as much sensation as if he were dragging his weary steps along dressed in the garb and armed with the staff of the palmers of old, for it quite passes the comprehension of the country yokel, whether

Welsh or English, that a person, from his appearance evidently under no necessity to be "upon the tramp," should march for pleasure twenty miles along a country road. It is, however, a natural feeling, and it is not reasonable to expect that a man whose life is spent, half in physical labour and half in satisfying physical wants, can understand that change of occupation is as good as rest.

If the pilgrim has occasion to inquire the distance in any case he must make due allowance, for the Welsh mile, like a west country one, is "long and narrow," which may lead him to think his labours o'er before he is justly entitled to do so.

The most conspicuous object on the road is Roch Castle, the last in this direction of the series of feudal castles which, as mentioned before, stretch along the coast. It is in ruins, and consists of only one tower which, however, from its elevated position is visible for miles around. The next two or three miles are calculated to test the powers of the pedestrian, for the road winds down the side of the hill to Newgate (not *Newgate*, as it is spelt in some maps), and after skirting the beach for a short distance mounts the hill again to its former elevation. The enthusiast who loves wild and "unimproved" nature may here find something to his taste. Right in the centre of the valley, close to the sea shore, stands the inevitable half-way house, where the pilgrim, if it is consistent with the rules of his order, may refresh himself with a glass of muddy beer. This appears to be the only building in the neighbourhood, so where the visitors who are said to come and stay here in the summer find accommodation it is difficult to say.

Continuing the journey Solwa is reached, which is a considerable village, and possesses, I believe, the nearest approach to a harbour in St. Bride's Bay. The pilgrim is now only four miles from St. David's, and he naturally expects to see in the distance a noble pile, with a lofty spire stretching towards heaven, a beacon to the way-worn pilgrim wearily approaching by land, a landmark to the watchful sailor far out at sea. But he will be disappointed, his pious aspirations will not be realised. Not until he gains the very centre of the city will he see more than the extreme top of the tower. For St. David, whatever were his reasons,

laid the foundations of his cathedral in a hollow, so from the hilly conformation of the surrounding country only a small portion can be visible to the approaching traveller.

In St. David's itself, besides the cathedral and the buildings connected with it, there is really nothing to see. Most of the houses are small and, as is usual in Wales, covered with a liberal coating of whitewash, or more strictly, yellowwash. The inhabitants are mostly agricultural labourers. There are also a few houses in which dwell such of the clergy connected with the cathedral as are compelled by their duties to live on the spot, and a few private residents. When the pilgrim has looked around he will no longer wonder at the bad communications. He will rather wonder at their being so good. And he will most decidedly be puzzled to know how the hotels (of which there are actually *two* in the place) are supported. Certainly not by hotel keeping *pur et simple*, for at either of these hostelries he will be able to enjoy the luxury of a coffee-room all to himself.

The palace, formerly one of the most magnificent in the kingdom, is now an utter ruin. This is, of course, a plain proof that the Bishop has for many years spent but little time in his cathedral city. In point of fact, his official residence is at Abergwilli, near Carmarthen. Carmarthen is certainly much better suited in every respect to be the head-quarters of a see which comprises the whole of the counties of Pembroke, Carmarthen, and Brecknock, and parts of other counties, both by its importance and central situation. In the time of Oliver Cromwell, the question of transferring the see from St. David's to Carmarthen was mooted, but it fell through, and most likely will never be revived, for the associations connected with the place could not be transferred, and the cathedral, in its present tender state, would, I should think, be beyond the well-known removing powers of our American cousins. One would have thought that St. David himself would have chosen a more central situation, especially when we consider that the see, as founded by him, was a metropolitan and archiepiscopal one. But I suppose we must seek an explanation in the fact that he wished to remove as far as possible from the scene of those disturbances among the Saxons, which Florence of Worcester tells us drove St. David to transfer himself and his

pall from Caerleon-upon-Usk to Minevia. In this, though he acted, perhaps, wisely for himself and his immediate successors, he provided anything but a quiet retreat for the monks of St. David's of a later age, for we are told that, on account of their nearness to the sea, the monastic buildings were frequently plundered by Danish and Norse rovers, and in the year 1087 burnt to the ground ; so that the present cathedral dates only from the twelfth century, which is comparatively modern for anything Welsh, for on the score of antiquity, either of his language or anything else, the true Welshman yields to none. Many persons have probably heard the amusing anecdote of a Welshman who had a pedigree so long that *half-way* up a note was made, "About this time Adam was born."

But if St. David's cannot claim to be the most ancient see connected with the Anglican Church, it can at any rate boast of possessing a longer list of bishops than any other, without exception. That may be accounted for by the consideration that most of its bishops, when it was a metropolitan see, had been translated. St. David has had no less than 118 successors. This, however, is hardly an enviable distinction, especially when we consider the parallel case of the Popes of Rome. In this long list of prelates, two names, separated by centuries, stand forth pre-eminent ; both, though in different ways, indelibly stamped upon the pages of history. The first is that of Asser, pupil of John Erigena, tutor of Alfred the Great, and author of the "Life of Alfred," and other historical and religious works. The other, a name inseparably connected with the history of our great civil war—that of William Laud, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.

It would seem that the wilds of Mynyw had some great attraction for "holy men of ancient time," for we are told that St. Patrick had settled there, thinking to spend the remainder of his days in quietude, and occupations befitting a saint. But he was informed by an angel, that thirty years must elapse before the man would be born who was to found a shrine at Menevia—that his labours were not yet over. A still greater destiny was awaiting him beyond the sea, where he would find a whole nation ready to receive him. So, Irishmen, if they can boast of having colonised Scotland, must be content to be beholden to St. David and the Welsh.

for their patron saint. They would, no doubt, have easily found another, but would he have been equally successful in clearing the Emerald Isle of "sarpints"?

Nearly all our acquaintance with the life and doings of St. David is derived from the writings of Giraldus Cambrensis, who, however, is as inveterate an old fablemonger as Herodotus, so that it may be doubted whether we should not be quite as well (from a historical point of view) without it. According to his account, the birth of St. David was, as mentioned above, predicted thirty years before the event took place, and was ushered in and attended by numerous prodigies. He was the son of Sandde, or Sanctus, son of King Keriticus, a Cardigan prince, and Nonnita. A neighbouring potentate, who, like a second Herod, wished to take the infant's life, was frustrated in his wicked designs by miraculously violent storms. All this set it beyond doubt that he was no ordinary mortal. So the boy grew up "full of grace" under the care of Paulinus, his tutor. He was so marvellously quick at learning that his companions swore he was miraculously aided. On attaining manhood he entered the priestly order, made a voyage to Jerusalem, where he was consecrated bishop by the Patriarch. He performed numerous miracles, of which one as an example will suffice *ab uno disce omnes*. His disciple Aidan was in Ireland, when he was informed by an angel that there was a plot amongst the monks of Menevia to poison St. David. The angel also bade him send at once a messenger to Wales, to warn the saint of his danger. Aidan replied that he had no boat, and that the wind was adverse. To this the angel replied, "Send at once; I will provide." Accordingly, Swithin is despatched in haste, and, by miraculous means, reaches Menevia in safety. St. David is warned that his food is poisoned. The holy saint is not alarmed, but dividing the food set before him into three portions, he throws one to a dog, the second to a crow, eating the third himself. The result was an astounding miracle, for the dog and crow fell down dead, while St. David was not the least affected. It is needless to comment on the preceding story, but it certainly has a tendency to raise in the mind recollections of the "Welsh Fasting Girl." The one story telling us how a

Welshman can eat, and the other how a Welshwoman need not. One of the last acts recorded of St. David, is, that he attended a synod assembled to discuss the heresy of Pelagius. His eloquence on this occasion was irresistible. The heretics were convinced of their errors, and St. David was elected by acclamation Archbishop of Wales. After all these pious deeds we must not be surprised to hear that he died in a green old age (about a century and a half), and that his spirit was seen to be borne aloft to heaven by angels. Of him the old chronicler says, "*Plangunt Populi patrem, Clerus Pontificem, pauperes sustentatorem, omnes vitæ ducem et ductorem.*"

As to the dates of his birth and death, there is much difference of opinion. The *Annales Cambriæ* give them as A.D. 458 and 601, according to which he attained the age of 143 years. The date of his removal from Caerleon to Mynyw is given in one place as 519, and in another, 607. Some authorities place the date of his death as early as 542, others as late as 642; so all that we really know about St. David may be summed up in a very few words. He was a Welshman who flourished in the sixth century of our era; was Archbishop, first of Caerleon-upon-Usk, afterwards of Menevia, to which he gave his name.

Not only to Menevia did he leave his name, but to the Welsh nation at large—and to every Welshman in particular; for it is owing to him that, even to the present day, they rejoice in the nickname of "Taffy," so dishonourably connected in one of our most popular nursery rhymes with purloined legs of beef. For "Taffy" is evidently nothing more than "Davy," the consonants being sharpened with a view to phonetic effect. This peculiarity of pronunciation is the distinguishing characteristic of the stage Welshman. Shakespeare introduces it, with ludicrous effect, into several of his plays, notably when he makes Captain Fluellen ask "What call you the town's name where Alexander the *Pig* was born?"

What strikes the visitor to Wales as most remarkable is the constant repetition of the same surnames. Wherever he goes he will be sure to find that nearly the entire population may be classified under Jones, Williams, Thomas, Rees, Evans, Davies, and Morgan. David is, of course, the most popular

Christian name, and in combination with Jones has a world-wide reputation. By the way, it would be interesting to know how many people named David Jones there are actually in existence at the present time. I should imagine they would rival in number our John Smiths. The ancient Welshman, to distinguish himself from his namesakes, used his father's name preceded by "ap," just as the English affixed "son," and the Anglo-Normans prefixed "Fitz." A knowledge of this fact reduces the already limited number of Welsh surnames, for on encountering such names as Bevan, Price, or Probert, we might think we had found an addition to the catalogue; but it is not so. Bevan is merely ap Evan, Price—ap Rice, and Probert—ap Robert; the latter equivalent to our Roberts or Robertson.

It cannot be denied that the Welsh language (so much lauded and so much abused) presents to a stranger, glancing over a page of a book printed in it, the most odd and unpronounceable conglomeration of letters that can be conceived. This is in great measure due to the fondness of the Welsh for superfluous consonants. This characteristic of their language is one of which Englishmen generally seem to be perfectly aware, especially if they have ever been under the necessity of deciphering and pronouncing to the best of their ability some of the names of stations on the Welsh railways. Tom Ingoldsby animadverts as follows on the unpronounceable name of a Welsh mountain :—

"For the vowels made use of in Welsh are so few,
That the A and the E, the I, O, and the U
Have really but little or nothing to do;
And the duty, of course, falls the heavier by far
On the L, and the H, and the N, and the R.

Its first syllable "Pen "

Is pronounceable—then

Come two LL's and two HH's, two FF's and an N,
About half a score R's and some W's follow,
Beating all my best efforts at euphony hollow."

To which we may add the letter D, upon which the duty falls uncommonly heavy, as it generally occurs double. This superfluity of consonants rapidly melts away as far as interfering with pronunciation is concerned, when we remember



that W and Y are always vowels, that several seemingly unutterable combinations of letters represent simple sounds, and that for most of the double consonants, of which the Welsh are so fond, a single letter would answer every purpose. It is true I am not sufficiently well versed in the language to know whether there are any subtle etymological mysteries which would be a loss to philological science wrapt up in these double letters; but I should say not seeing that the same word will occur on the same page spelt in the one case with a double D, and in the other with one D. Englishmen should be the last people in the world to find fault with orthographical anomalies, for they have perhaps the most complex series of sounds and symbols for expressing them of any language. But they tolerate them, and wisely so, for the sake of the valuable knowledge stored up in the uncouth forms of their words. But where such is not the case there can be no reason for delaying the advent of the phonetic system. But the true Welshman will probably not allow that any such change is required in his incomparable language. As one said to me, "You see, in Welsh, words are pronounced exactly as they are spelt: yes, indeed!" The writer of an amusing article in *London Society* brings forward a sensible refutation of the charge that Welsh cannot get on without consonants, in the shape of some verses which do not contain a single Welsh consonant. These lines I take the liberty of transcribing as a literary curiosity—

"O'i wiw wy i weu é á, a'i weau,
O'i wyau e weua,
E' weua ei we aia',
A'i weau yw ieuau iá."

They refer to the silkworm and are rendered into English as follows:—

"I perish by my art; dig my own grave;
I spin my thread of life; my death I weave."

But whatever a certain class of Welshmen may say in honour and praise of the language, no one can gainsay the fact that the national language, as well as the national customs of Wales, is fast dying out. This is, of course, what we should naturally expect, when we consider that every Welshman who

wishes to get on in business (and what Jew is a keener business man than a Welshman?) must know English. Thus, speaking Welsh is optional, and only necessary when he comes in contact with the lower classes of his countrymen. It is most instructive on this point to listen to a conversation amongst the lower middle class; showing how thoroughly English is established by the side of Welsh. Such a conversation is usually carried on half in one language, half in the other, the speakers apparently hardly conscious of which they are using. Even now, there are many Welshmen who, knowing English as a matter of course, pride themselves on having a more intimate acquaintance with French than with their native tongue. In the next generation, the number of these will no doubt be greatly increased, and the Welsh language will in time be relegated to the limbo of dead tongues, to which its sister dialect the Cornish preceded it more than a century ago.

It is to this neglect of the upper classes that the prevalence of dissent in Wales is to be attributed. The parochial clergy did not take the trouble to make themselves conversant with the Welsh language, consequently the poorer portion of their flocks deserted to the Dissenting chapels, where the services are usually in Welsh. It is a remarkable fact, and shows that there is still considerable vigour left in the old language, that the lower class Welsh, although using English in their business, like to perform their devotions on Sunday in their national tongue. As a case in point, there are two Baptist chapels in Carmarthen, one in which English services are held is very poorly attended, while the other, in which the service is conducted in Welsh, has a large congregation.

It is among such a congregation as this, and in the market-place, that the traveller in search of specimens of old Welsh costume must look. He will most probably be rewarded with a sight of the tall conical "chimney pot" hat, peculiar to the Welshwoman, otherwise it is quite possible for a person to spend a week or a fortnight in Wales without seeing any trace of the national Welsh costume, so great are the changes which have taken place in the present century.



GROTTA FERRATA.

CON the twenty-fifth of March there is an annual fair held in the little town or village of Grotta Ferrata, about ten miles to the south-east of Rome. These country festas are getting fewer and fewer even in Italy. Railroads and the march of civilisation are gradually stamping out all traces of simple country life and its national characteristics in most European lands; but so interesting and attractive are these gay country gatherings that if the visitor to Rome at that season has the time to spare he could not do better than give a day to the fair at Grotta Ferrata.

The morning of the 25th March rose fair and promising, with all the bright softness of Italy's lovely spring days. We were up betimes, and away by an early train to Frascati, which was our first step to the village fair. We wound our way amongst the ruins of those marvellous aqueducts of ancient times, of which the Claudian crossed the Campagna in giant strides with ten miles of arches, six of which still remain, while thirty-six more miles of subterranean work completed the forty-six of which the great aqueduct consisted. What vast conceptions, what mighty energy, what indomitable will had those old Romans, as their works do testify! Then, passing amidst the various mounds and undulations, across a plain of verdure all bright with spring flowers, among which the large, handsome, meek-eyed oxen of the Campagna were grazing, with here and there a ruined castle of the middle ages telling of the feuds of the Colonna and Orsini factions which took the place of the struggles of Rome with the Æquians and Volscians of earlier times—through orchards of almond trees and nectarines, fragrant and gay with their burdens of rich blossom—we reached the station of Frascati about three quarters of an hour from Rome. An omnibus was waiting to take passengers up to the town which is

approached by a deep ascent of nearly a mile from the station; but Grotta Ferrata was our destination, and we preferred the two miles walk through fields, and woods, and lanes, and amidst the song of birds—a great treat after the stony streets of Rome.

Grotta Ferrata is a picturesque village on the lower slope of the Alban hills—those Alban hills so striking an object in the wondrously beautiful views around Rome, with their ever-changing hues from deep violet to softest pink or opal. It has a castellated monastery, which, with the church and its campanile, are the most striking objects of the village, and indeed at a distance the former looks more like a castle than a monastery. It owes its military towers and ditch to that most warlike Pope, Julius II., who, when Cardinal Rovere, was abbot of this monastery. But it dates from a much earlier period—the beginning of the tenth century—and was erected in memory of the Greek Saint Nilus who was a monk of the order of St. Basil, who settled in this neighbourhood when driven from the East of Italy by the Saracens, and was renowned for his good works. It is the only monastery of Basilian monks in the Papal States, and the ritual is performed after the Greek manner. It possessed at one time a valuable Greek library, said to be the finest in Italy; but various popes removed it by degrees to Rome, and its contents are now chiefly in the Vatican and the Barberini libraries.

The military and monastic gloom of the place was brightened on this March day with the glorious sunshine, and the bustle and gaiety of the annual fair. The great square outside the walls of the Monastery was filled with booths and crowded with happy people, most of whom were decorated with a large, rather well-cut, paper flower. We stopped at one of the flower stalls where we were entreated to buy some of these, and having provided ourselves with what appeared to be the badge of the fair, threaded our way through the lines of booths, finding abundance to satisfy our curiosity and amusement. Here was a stall laden with good pieces of homespun cloth; there another, with garments ready made, hats, boots, and all that the countryman could require, while a dark-eyed, handsome youth, with a bright

neckcloth hanging loose over his white shirt, or with a coloured vest of brilliant hues, held out the most unsuitable articles, and urged us, with laughing eyes, to buy. Indeed, every imaginable thing was to be had. There were stalls devoted to images of the Madonna, crucifixes, votive lamps and candles, little dishes for holy water, which women with earnest faces pressed upon us, whilst evidently setting us down as cold, irreligious foreigners for refusing to buy their wares. There were household goods of every description—glass and crockery, bright brass and copper utensils, lamps of every shape and substance—but the most striking to us were the refreshment stalls, where pigs were roasted whole and lay smoking on the counter, and to judge by the constant demand for the great, thick slices which were cut off and sold to the *contadini*, it was a very popular dish. It looked and smelt most savoury with its rich, black stuffing, but we could not make the effort of tasting it.

It was altogether a most curious and interesting scene. Crowds of merry purchasers were bandying wit around us and voluble stall-keepers were puffing their goods, but all in an innocent, light-hearted sort of style. One felt less apprehension in wandering through the mazes of this fair than could have been the case in our own beloved country where the element of *drink* plays so large a part in any festivity. It struck us very much on several occasions in Italy, when we had got entangled in a great crowd of the people, how quiet and courteous they were—no pushing and driving as with us, but just quietly making way here and there, and if it is a show you are watching, occasionally they will help you to a better view.

We purchased a Roman lamp at one of the stalls, one of those brass household lamps, with small branch lights and hanging appliances for trimming, which, two thousand years ago, were the household lamps of Rome, and continue so still, and carrying off our memento of the fair of Grotta Ferrata with great satisfaction we entered the church, which was crowded with earnest worshippers. The festa outside and the devotion inside were in curious contrast. The very priests seemed different from the city ones, and, indeed, the priest of the Italian village is generally the simple,

gentle father and friend of his people. The great devoutness struck us very much. Men and women, quite as many of the former as the latter, in their varied picturesque costumes were kneeling in every available space, but seemed thoroughly absorbed in prayer—very different from the general worshippers in the Roman churches who were ever ready to look around at any new comer. But these simple country folk never raised their eyes whoever passed, and as soon as one rose from his knees and left the church another took his place.

The church has an *Atrium*, or outer square, in the centre of which is a black cross, professing to be the exact height of the Saviour. Fine old carved doors give dignity to the principal entrance, and in the vestibule are ancient bas-reliefs which belonged to the original monastery of St. Nilus. A Greek inscription over the door exhorts all who enter to put away impurity of thought.

“Ye who would enter here the house of God
Cast out the leaven of pride and worldly thought,
That kindly ye may find the Judge within.”

Curious mosaics of the Lamb and the twelve Apostles are on the vault above the choir. Pope Benedict IX. lies buried here, but the church was too full to examine its contents in detail, so we passed quietly out of the aisle into the chapel of St. Nilus and St. Bartholomew, both of which saints had been Abbots of this monastery.

Here are Domenichino's celebrated frescoes. One of the attendant priests told us that he painted them for the monastery in gratitude for its hospitality to him in a time of poverty; but other accounts tell us that Cardinal Farnese brought Domenichino in 1610 to decorate this Greek chapel, which he had determined to restore. The frescoes represent various legends in the lives of the good Abbots, and are considered to be some of the artist's finest works, particularly that of the epileptic boy brought to St. Nilus to be cured, which is said to rival, if not to surpass, Raphael's celebrated picture of that subject. The most striking is the meeting of St. Nilus and the Emperor Otho III. who came to visit the saint and ask his blessing. In the back ground is his retinue,

amongst whom is the beautiful face of a young page, said to be a girl of Frascati for whom Domenichino, then a young man, entertained a deep but unsuccessful love, as the parents of the maid would have nothing to say to him, and were so enraged at his introducing her portrait that he had to fly from Grotta Ferrata.

These works of art examined, and our lunch, which we had brought with us, discussed on a elevated spot above the village piazza, commanding a lovely view, we took leave of the bright scene before us and returned by omnibus to Frascati, with the intention of completing our day by a visit to Tusculum. While waiting for donkeys for some of our party we entered the cathedral, where are memorial tablets to two of our Stuarts—the young Pretender, who died here in 1788, and his brother the Cardinal York, who was Bishop of the diocese.

Mounting our donkeys we ascended the steep hill to Tusculum, past the villas Aldobrandini and Falconieri, from whose terraces there are magnificent views. Higher up in the villa Rufinella, built on the sites of the villas of Lucullus and Cicero, the remains of which are still pointed out. Our path wound up the side of the hill under the shade of chesnut trees, and amidst the luxuriance of spring flowers, anemones and violets, which sweetly scented the air. There are three distinct sets of remains; first, mediæval; higher up, the ancient Roman city with its amphitheatre and Cicero's villa, &c.; and topmost of all, on the summit of the steep hill behind the theatre, is the Arx, or Acropolis, "the old primæval fortress from which Tusculum and its Dictators looked around on a crowd of other heights crowned by confederate or hostile cities." (Freeman).

Tusculum was more ancient than Rome itself, the chief of the thirty Latin cities,

"The proudest of them all,"

which combined to reinstate the tyrant Tarquins in Rome; and in the plain just below, "under the Porcian height," which is still called Monte Porzio, was fought the great battle of Lake Regillus, so famous in legend and song. But after that unsuccessful attempt Tusculum made peace with Rome,

and became a steady friend of the Romans, who admitted the Tusculans to the privilege of citizenship so highly did they prize the friendship of this warlike people. The position and fortifications of Tusculum were so strong that Hannibal was unable to reduce it. It was still celebrated in the Middle Ages under the Counts of Tusculum, when it sided with the Emperor Frederick II. and maintained a struggle against the Papal cause, defeating the Romans in a pitched battle with great slaughter. The Papal armies subsequently subdued Tusculum, and Pope Alexander III. made it his favourite residence. No less than seven popes came from the House of Tusculum. When the English ambassadors were sent by Henry II. to plead his innocence of the murder of Thomas à Beckett, they were received at Tusculum by Alexander III. in 1171; but after his death the city again joined the Imperialists, and it was finally burnt by the Romans in 1191. So thorough was the destruction that Tusculum never revived. The few inhabitants who survived the fury of their conquerors hid themselves among the underwood, or *frasche*, on the lower slope of the hill, with which they built themselves booths or huts. Their refuge afterwards developed itself into a more permanent abiding place and retained the name *Frascati*, whilst the original Tusculum remained a heap of ruins gradually overgrown by time. The most perfect of the remains is the theatre. It was excavated in 1839 by Maria Christina, Queen Dowager of Sweden, who ended her days in Rome. Near it are some remains of the walls and gates of the ancient town.

But the greatest charm of Tusculum now is the view from the Arc or summit, which is one of the finest in the world. All around is the classic ground of the early struggles of Rome in the days of the kings and the commonwealth, when the Samnites and the Volscians descended from their mountain homes and sought to banish those sturdy intruders. There is the plain, formerly the Lake Regillus, where

"All in the lands of Tusculum
Was fought the glorious fight,"

In mediæval times the Savelli, the Colonna, and the Orsini had their towers and fortresses in that country, and kept up the warlike character of the province. But all was peace and

beauty as we gazed around us on that sweet spring day. Looking north, we saw the whole range of the Sabine mountains, conspicuous amongst them the isolated grandeur of Soracte, while the more distant Apennines were topped with snow, but between us and them were the soft hues only known in an Italian atmosphere, which make these views around Rome a very dream of beauty. To the east were the Alban hills, with Monte Cava towering in the centre (where stood in ancient times the temple of Jupiter Latialis) hedging in our view, all purple in their afternoon glory of colouring, and studded with their picturesque, white villages, some of which, like Rocca di Papa, cling like an eagle's nest to the steep rocky sides of the mountain. To the south is the site of Alba Longa, the ancient city amongst the hills from whence issued the founders of mighty Rome, and the Alban Lake, with its marvellous legends, and so on to the blue Mediterranean which bounds the view on the south ; whilst looking westwards across the vast Campagna, we distinguish the mighty, matchless dome, which reigns supreme in the Eternal City, as indeed throughout the world, for perfection of form, and size, and grace.

It was a glorious view, and we drank our fill of its beauty before we tore ourselves away, then once more returned to Frascati and sought some more material sustenance at the inn there. While waiting for our cutlets to be prepared, some musicians entered the room and amused us with songs to the accompaniment of the guitar, and then quietly and simply sat down, not far from us, for their share of refreshment, too.

The evening was approaching, and we felt we must get back to Rome after our most enjoyable day. The sun was setting with soft, rich glow, the cicale were commencing their evening song, soon to be deadened by the more musical nightingales, and we hastened on to the railway station. On our way there, we suddenly came on a most curious and beautiful view, framed by the old buildings of the town on either side. We thought it was the boundless sea, and on its calm surface appeared a boat and sail in the far distance ; but on closer examination it proved to be the Campagna, and our black sail was the Dome of St. Peter's twelve miles off the only building of Rome distinctly visible. The stars

looked large and soft as we sped across the Campagna, the moon rose and shone through the Claudian arches dispelling the last lovely traces of the sunset sky, and we reached grand old Rome again, well pleased with our day's journey.

K.

AN OLD PICTURE.

A PICTURE it is of a maiden sweet,
'Twas painted in days long ended and fled ;
But the face looks out thro' the years so fleet,
Tho' others are gone, still *she* is not dead.

The loose wavy tresses of hair—they lie
Clustering over her brow of snow ;
The radiance of her blue, brilliant eye
Is clear as a lake in the sunset glow.

That quaint, strange dress of a bygone day—
The bracelet old on your arm of white !
You smile from the picture, and here I stay
Lingering by you, though near is night.

Whose was the skilled hand that drew your face ?
Gave the dainty colours and red lips' hue ?
As he bent o'er the canvas that form to trace,
His heart must have beat with love of you !

How sweet are the lights in your deep blue eyes !
How sunny the waves of your rippling hair !
Your face looks forth—'tis immortalised ;
But his who drew you is lost for e'er.

Ah ! had I but lived in the long ago,
Would I have met you my own silent maid ?
Perhaps when life is ended the world shall know
How many were worshipping—only a shade !

MARY CROSS.



DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 5.

HARK! the merry tune is ringing!
Though so long they have been dead—
Every one to-day is singing
What they to each other said.

I.

To me it really seems absurd,
To find much comfort in a word.

II.

A regular case of "sic vos non vobis"
Is the cool request to do this "pro nobis."

III.

"What does it do?" asks the puzzled inquirer.
What it does, rhymes to Mrs. Pott's admirer.

IV.

To the old maxim of our childhood true,
She never speaks unless she's spoken to.

V.

As heavy oft as lead, and dry as bones,
I'm told the plural may be found in stones.

PRETTY ESMERALDA.

SOLUTION OF DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 4.

	H	ome	R
(I)	O		U
	M	istra	L
	E	k	E

Correct answers have been received from: Bear—Shark—Artemisia—What, Never?—Nursery—Quite a Young Thing too—Rumtifo—Charmione—Black Beetle—Outremer—P.V.—Dowager—Hanky Panky—Numantia—Lux—La Belle Alliance—Two Cockneys—S.P.E.—Miserere—Beolne—and Brevette; 21 correct and 37 incorrect—total 58.

Miserere is credited with Acrostic No. 3.



MESOSTICH No. 5.

THE wickets are pitched, my brave W. G.,
And the "Demon"'s in England no more.
We wish you good luck, and hope never to see
You go out with so sorry a score.

I.

Backward or forward, 'tis all the same,
Slang for a coin and short for a name.

II.

I really think
That printer's ink
On white shows better than on pink.

MADAME FAVART.

SOLUTION OF MESOSTICH No. 4.

o W l
b A t
Ame R ica

Correct answers have been received from: Artemisia—
Quite a Young Thing too—Nursery—Shark—Charmione—
Rumtifoo—What, Never?—Dowager—Black Beetle—P.V.—
La Belle Alliance—Beolne—S.P.E.—Miserere—and Brevette ;
15 correct, and 30 incorrect—total 45.

ACROSTIC AND MESOSTICH RULES.

I.—Each number of the *St. James's Magazine* will contain a Double Acrostic and a Mesostich.

II.—In *each* competition Three Annual Prizes, in money (1st prize twenty-five guineas, 2nd prize ten guineas, 3rd prize five guineas), will be awarded to the three most successful solvers.

III.—Special competitions will be held for guessing off ties (if any).

IV.—Prize-winners will be required to furnish their names and addresses for publication.

V.—The same solver may win prizes in both competitions.

VI.—Only *one* word can be accepted as the solution of each light.

VII.—Answers addressed to "The Acrostic Editor," 5, Friar Street, Ludgate Hill, E.C., must be posted in time to be received by the first post on the 10th of each month, or on the 11th, if the 10th falls on a Sunday.

VIII.—In accordance with the wishes of numerous Subscribers, the Acrostics and Mesostiches for March, June, September and December will be in French.



St. James's Magazine.

JUNE, 1879.

HUBERT MAITLAND'S WRAITH.

A NOVEL.

By FELIX HOLLAND.

CHAPTER X.

PHILIP'S OCCUPATION GONE.



PHILIP CELINI'S self-confidence, so far as it concerned his duties in the counting-house of Curtice, Aldair, and Co., certainly was not warranted by his performance of them. It is true he proved himself a facile penman, and so long as he had only copying and translation to do, all was well ; but when the vital matter of arithmetic was in question the chief clerk soon found that his subordinate's calculations had as many inaccuracies as a school boy's. He had, too, a most undesirable habit of wandering off into dreamland whenever a moment's leisure occurred, and he further disgraced "The House" by singing snatches of songs, whistling under his breath, writing staves of music, and sketching the faces of his fellow clerks on the blotting paper.

For these things he was reproved again and again. As often he promised amendment, and in five minutes forgot his promise.

One morning Mr. Aldair, entering the counting-house to whisper a few intentions to his chief clerk, observed his new employé most commendably busy. The great man was departing when his quick eye caught a glimpse of Philip's

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ledger, and discovered to his horror that the young man, so far from being engaged in an abstruse calculation, was leisurely ornamenting an immense sheet of white blotting paper with an allegorical sketch representing the great Aldair himself, done to the life, in the act of being carried away bodily by some mythical creature, which, by its hoofs and incipient tail, and the peculiar conformation of its ears, might have been copied from some Grecian fawn in the Capitol, had not its sable hue and crooked nose indicated a more Eastern origin. Philip was just giving the finishing touch to the sketch when he became conscious of an angry face frowning over his shoulder. He did not flinch, he did not even discontinue his facetious amusement.

"And 'pray what may you intend to represent by this, Sir?" sternly asked the great Aldair.

Philip looked up lazily; his eyes had in them an amused smile, but no more of surprise or fright than if he had been detected in erasing an erroneous figure.

"I call it the shadow of a coming event. Do you consider the likeness good?"

The great merchant did not vouchsafe his valuable critical opinion—he simply sent for Mr. Cox, instructed that worthy to pay Philip Celini a month's salary in advance, and show him the door.

Philip went straight to the cashier's desk, received his salary, and in a few minutes was half a mile away, on his road to Kensington, singing so blithely that careworn city men paused in their hurry and envied him as he passed.

It was four o'clock when, still humming his song, he entered the gates of Kensington Gardens. Every morning and evening he came and went through the gardens. Every evening he paused and sometimes rested on an old octagonal seat that surrounded the foot of a decayed elm. For you must know a beautiful girl and her governess had been wont to stray here about these hours. And as often as they passed the governess observed that the countenance of the young man brightened with pleasure. Seeing this Mdle. Barb, with the natural bashfulness of her nation, contrived one day to drop her glove; the stranger, perceiving this at once, restored it with a graceful bow, and thereby com-

menced a conversation in the French tongue, the purport of which was nothing whatever. Nevertheless, the handsome young man contrived to make himself very agreeable to Mdlle. Barb, besieging her heart with a continuous fire of compliments, and astonishing her pupil into a state of preternatural loveliness. When at last he said good bye at the gates, this innocent little beauty, encouraged by her governess's example, or more probably quite accidentally, dropped a rose from her bosom. If she hoped by this piece of pretty coquetry to bring the charming youth to her side again, she lost her rose for her pains. For Philip Celini immediately appropriated the flower and kissing it fervently placed it in his button-hole. Every man, we have heard, has his price. Honesty, like other virtues, fails at a certain point. Had Philip found a bag of Aldair's gold he would unquestionably have restored it at once, but to return a rosebud to Aldair's lovely daughter! O, my most incorruptible young reader, might not even your integrity have failed at such a test?" Mdlle. Barb went her way rejoicing in the success of her coqueterie, and firmly convinced that the beau jeune homme was *éperdument* in love with her; and from that time hardly a day passed without a rencontre.

Of course Mdlle. Barb was aware of the dangerous impropriety of her conduct. But how to obviate it? Leave her pupil at home and contrive a walk by herself? But Miss would not be left at home. Appoint her long and difficult tasks, and threaten to tell papa if they were not perfectly learned? But Miss declared she could acquire her lessons nowhere so well as in Kensington Gardens. Driven at last to desperation by the refractoriness of her hitherto obedient pupil, Mdlle. Barb determined to exert her unquestionable authority and command Miss not to leave her room till she had accomplished her much neglected impositions. Whereupon the young lady defiantly threw the obnoxious books in her face, and insisted on the wonted recreatory promenade.

So Miss Aldair gained her point, and from that hour Mdlle. Barb knew that her character and livelihood were at the mercy of her pupil. Philip, too, was aware of this, and no longer expended his compliments on Mdlle. Barb's attain-

ments and graces ; and although he had never an opportunity of speaking with Emily except in presence of the jealously watchful governess, these two young persons contrived to understand one another, and, ah ! me, to love each other as earnestly and sincerely as if there had been no great gulf of equality yawning between them.

Wistfully scanning the idle concourse around, Philip pursued his journey. The comparative solitude of the little forest of trees was reached at last, and the weather-worn seat surrounding the patriarchal elm.

"She will be here in an hour," quoth he. And he wandered away to look at the people and the flowers.

Many loungers were about. Fashionable ladies and gentlemen seeking an appetite for dinner ; actresses airing their worn and painted faces in the sunshine ; foreigners distinguished and undistinguished, invalids in bath chairs, nursery maids with their children and proximate soldiers, *bonnes* with their white caps and brown faces, pale students, authors, cadets, *roués*,—all were here ; and Philip saw them all as he passed, and thought only of one absent face.

Will she never come ? How long the minutes grow ! How tedious the stream of unrecognizable faces ! The very sunshine grows weary, and the odour of the flowers is heart-sickening faint, the gentle west wind in the trees is whispering mournfully, "She is not here, she will not come !"—"She will not come !"

But no ; she is coming at last. Far away yet, one little face in a crowd ; but he sees it, she is coming, hidden now in the throng, but nearer and nearer every step. Oh, joy ! she is here at last !

With a flushed face and a palpitating heart he bows, and smiles. But she does not return his greeting ; she merely glances at him—imploringly, sorrowfully glances—and passes away, leaning on the arm of—Abraham Moss.

CHAPTER XI.

A PEEP BEHIND THE SCENES.

JEALOUS, chagrined, terrified, Mdle. Barb had hit upon a plan which promised fair to gain her ends without endangering her position. She confided her trouble to Abraham Moss, the approved candidate for her pupil's hand. After many protestations of secrecy, and promises of great import with reference to certain remote but assured contingencies, that amiable young man went direct to Aldair and related the whole story.

The great man saw at once that all his schemes for marrying off his daughter satisfactorily, while yet in the comparatively manageable state of pupillage, were in imminent danger of frustration. Aware of the latent obstinacy in his daughter's character, his endeavour had been to keep her perfectly excluded from the world, and hurry her into a prudent marriage while she was yet too inexperienced to know the dangerous passion of love.

To this end he had educated her in a school that was only another name for a convent, and since her return to Curtice House had surrounded her with spies, and subjected her, so far as he could control it, only to the company of the old and uncongenial. Judge, then, of his rage when he learned that his favourite and most trusted duenna had played him false, endangered the obedience of his daughter, and perhaps lost him the wealth of an extortioner's only son. In vain Mdle. Barb protested, gesticulated, and implored, in vain the elected lover cringed, and grinned, alternately repenting, and enjoying the storm he had raised. In vain Emily wept, trembled, begged forgiveness for her detested governess, generously taking all the blame on herself. Aldair only cursed and stormed the louder, heedless of all but his own passion and chagrin. Mdle. Barb's boxes were packed, and she left Curtice House forthwith. Emily was sent to her chamber, and her outraged sire himself locked the door. She took no more walks except in the company of Abraham Moss, and the wedding day was already determined.

The secret soon came out. That very afternoon when Philip met him in Kensington Gardens, Abraham Moss had performed the ceremony of asking Emily Aldair to be his wife. Now, Emily had been in constant expectation of this for some time. For although a few sanguine young ladies may have expected offers that were received, no woman ever received one which was not expected.

Emily had not only anticipated it, she had framed an answer. It cost her many a sleepless night, this terrible shadow of a coming event. She had pondered, and wept, and prayed over it till all the roses faded from her cheeks, and the bright eyes grew dim; for our little thoughtless Emily, though very far from a heroine, could not hurt another's feeling without sharing the pain. Therefore, when Abraham Moss, in the fulness of his heart, formally declared his passion and position, he was not a little surprised at the abruptness of the decision. He had anticipated a little beating about the bush such as, "I am so young;" "Give me time to consider," &c., &c. But there is nothing so sure of happening as the unforeseen; just the answer he had not expected was the one he received, a firm, unequivocal, final "No."

It was not so very difficult a reply to have cost so many hours and tears to shape, but it was a very effectual one, and all the eloquence of Sappho could not have put it better.

Abraham Moss knew very little of the girl's character, but he had seen enough to know that nothing he could say would affect her decision, and wisely left her to the superior persuasive powers of Mr. Aldair.

They walked home in silence. The wilful girl had relinquished his arm, and would not again accept his proffered assistance. Mr. Moss was a very gallant man, and never a moment doubted his ultimate success, not even now; but he reproached himself bitterly for not having been of more pains to win the heart of his intended bride before asking her hand. The fact was he had relied too much on Emily's filial obedience. He had had great experience in affairs of the heart, particularly among milliners and ballet girls; and he rightly judged that all women were alike in these little matters, and consequently had no need to be told that Emily did not love him. There was all the difference in the world between

the conduct of this cool, soft-spoken little beauty, and that of the pretty demonstrative grisette who was at that moment waiting for him at the street corner. No, Emily's disdain had taught him that ; but it had now also taught him that if he was to prosecute his suit successfully, he must depend more on his own fascinating qualities and less on Aldair's authority. So he bade Emily good-bye very kindly and tenderly, and said, in the very softest and mournfullest tone of his persuasive voice as he a moment retained the reluctant little hand, "Forgive me if I have pained you, Miss Aldair. Believe me, bitterly as I feel this unexpected refusal myself, I am not without commiseration for you, and I am still more sorry for your dear papa, who has centred his whole hopes on our union. Do not be surprised if he is angry. Think it is only his sorrow not his anger if he scolds you, and forgive me its unworthy cause."

Emily unconsciously returned the pressure of his soft hand—he spoke so kindly, and hurried to her chamber, there to cry herself into a more tranquil frame of mind ; and Mr. Moss hastened to his passionate little grisette at the adjacent street corner.

CHAPTER XII.

ALDAIR IS FIRM—VERY FIRM.

DINNER was over, and Emily, who had sat the hour confronting her father in fearful silence, was about to retire, as was her wont at the earliest opportunity, when the tall footman brought in a letter, and with it great relief to Aldair, whose dull eyes brightened as he broke the seal. But their brightness kindled into a flash of anger as he perused its contents.

"Ungrateful baggage !" he exclaimed, throwing the letter on the table.

Emily, pale and trembling, dared not raise her head.

"So, Miss, you have actually had the audacity to refuse the hand of Mr. Abraham Moss!" exclaimed Aldair, sternly frowning on the terrified girl.

Emily felt the room turning round, and held on to a chair.

"Stand up, miss," shouted Aldair.

The poor girl rose, tottering, to her feet, but she was too frightened to fully understand her father's anger.

"Listen, miss," said Aldair impressively. "I learn by this letter you declined the hand of Mr. Abraham Moss, and with it the greatest honour and the greatest fortune that will ever be offered you. I left you to your inclinations this far, not doubting your good sense and training would guide you to your duty. The fact of my approving this gentleman's addresses was tantamount to a command on my part for you to approve them. You have shown the same selfishness and perversity which distinguished your unfortunate mother—I cannot be surprised at that, but thank yourself for what follows. To gratify the contemptible sentimentality of your nature I did what few fathers in my position would have done—gave you the opportunity of falling in love with this honest and honourable gentleman. You have chosen to disregard my wishes and abuse my kindness; therefore, I say again, thank yourself for what follows. You have yet two chances, and I give you your choice—either, this hour write a letter to Mr. Moss recalling your decision, and accepting,—mark you, cordially, and of your own free will—accepting his fort—" Aldair was about to say fortune, but checked himself and substituted "his hand;"—"or, marry your suitor's father, who has already expressed his willingness. You have your choice: take it. But if ever you dare again to speak one word to that impertinent, penniless rascal, or so much as return his look or his bow, my curse shall follow you to your grave."

The glasses rang aloud as Aldair struck his clenched hand on the table in his wrath, but not so loud and shrill as the shriek that thrilled through every corridor and chamber of the great echoing house as Emily fell fainting at his feet.

Aldair rose half-stunned by the terror and agony of that heartrending cry. An expression almost of pity overspread his great stern face as he gazed vacantly down at the beauti-

ful marble figure lying so deathlike at his feet. Then, suddenly, the nascent commiseration was superseded by a look of unutterable terror and remorse—Emily's weary, reproachful face was the face of her dead mother, as she lay so young and beautiful in her shroud. Had Aldair a conscience, and was he now listening to its bitter reproaches? Who can tell?

A minute he bent over the prostrate girl; then with a bitter curse he left the room.

CHAPTER XIII.

ONE MORE UNFORTUNATE.

BURNING with jealousy and envy, Philip remained watching the beautiful little lady and her stalwart companion in the faint hope that she would turn again; but they passed out of sight, and Emily did not look back. At length he became conscious that strangers were observing him, and hurried away with a heart so heavy that the sunshine was a burden. Fool, quoth he, what right had I to flatter myself she cared for me,—me a poor devil with hardly an authentic name to call myself by, and she so rich and beautiful, fool that I am!

Thus lamenting, and upbraiding his cruel fate, Philip hastened onward. But whither? Home he called it—home to the Crown and Candle, to Ebenezer Scroggs and his friends. To sit and listen to their stupid stories and lead the chorus of their rollicking songs, to hear the speeches and perorations of Dick Gadaway or Mr. Scroggs's chopped logic and half intelligible brogue.

No. Philip felt he could not bear it to-night, and quitting the frequented paths he cast himself down on the grass beneath a solitary tree and there wept like a girl.

Hour after hour went by, the red clouds gathered over the setting sun, and the lurid lights of London kindled in the eastern sky. Then the young man rose and ran swiftly from the place, as if seeking to escape his misery. Away past the dark park side, along the dusty road, over

the hill, faster and faster towards that lurid horizon and the realms of turmoil, and passion, and sin, and despair; the capital of selfishness and prodigality, the hell of the poor, the paradise of the rich, and the last refuge of the miserable.

It is no longer twilight, and the evening crowds are gathering in the streets bent on their various purposes of pleasure, no less in earnest than the busy sober citizens who have trodden the same pavements some hours before in patient stubborn toil. The harlot is out plying her wretched trade. The libertine too is at her side, or hastening to his nightly haunts, there to squander his soul as well as his substance in pursuit of the alluring syren that eludes him still. And the gay rake, who has outlived his manhood, but not his folly—gay still, in spite of his grey hairs and shrunken limbs, and his laugh is loudest of them all; but his face, if you catch him unawares, is more miserable than the starving dog he spurns from his path. The young, the middle-aged, the old, the needy, the lowly, the rich, the vulgar, the refined alike are there rolling on in that great tide that ebbs and flows like the ocean whelming the wretched in its sparkling waves.

He is there at last, under the garish lamps, in the roar and bustle of the streets. Heedless of all, he hurries along, elbowing his way through the motley crowd, or surging with it like a bubble on a stream. The lamplight falls upon his pale face—so miserable that poor unfortunate girls and hardened women cast a look of pity on him as he passes. Four hours ago he was bounding through the same streets carolling his hopeful song—and now!

Heedless ever he drifts with the current, and it carries him whither it will. It pauses, and he pauses with it; a group of staggering inarticulate humanity obstructs the way, but it pours round it, past it, into a great gaping doorway. It may be a theatre; it may be a church; all one to Philip, he seeks neither duty nor pleasure, so he drifts with the stream.

It is the Palazzo, the favourite resort of that numerous class by which Carlyle asserts the British Isles are mostly inhabited. Philip had seen much, but no city where he

had been had shown him such a fool's paradise as this,—so many ugly painted faces; so many low and narrow foreheads, so many hollow eyes and sensual mouths. Here was neither gaiety nor misery, content nor discontent, passion or apathy; only stupid naked vulgar vice, hungry vice, bloated vice, but vice always and ever in its lowest meanest form. "Take care of your pockets, gents!" cried a half-intoxicated individual, offering this apology for his rudeness, as he dug his elbow into Philip's side to gain a slight advantage.

"I think, Sir, there are as few people here of the dignity of pickpockets, as of the manners of gentlemen," replied Philip, politely making way for the poor wretch.

"You're a foreigner, hay?" observed a haggard, shoppy young fellow, partially removing the German silver knob of his cane from his mouth to facilitate amiable intercourse.

Philip did not reply; and his questioner continued, "Not many such fine girls as these at Parry, hay? Look at that one there with the blue bonnet—the fat one—ain't she a beauty, hay?"

"I suppose in the estimation of hogs sows are beautiful," cried Philip, losing all self-control and struggling to get free.

Once out in the open air again, with the night wind on his face, and the feeble stars peeping mildly down, Philip heaved a great sigh of relief, and returned on his aimless journey. Soon he was crossing a bridge, and the deep dark river lay moaning far below. A minute he paused, and leaning over the parapet he repeated almost unconsciously some verses he had read in a favourite little book of Emily Aldair's which she used occasionally to bring with her to the seat under the old elm tree. They began, "I stood on the bridge at midnight," but as I should have to go far to find a reader who is not familiar with the beautiful brave poem, I need not write them. Philip had a wonderful memory—especially for anything connected ever so slightly with Emily Aldair—and he repeated the verses with hardly an effort. He murmured the last lines several times to himself reflectively—"The symbol of love in Heaven, and its wavering image here." Aye if there only were a Heaven! There must be, Emily believes it—that is better than theological proof—and she

has a mother there, and so have I. If she should be looking down on me now—but no, Heaven is too far away for its blessed inhabitants to behold our misery, or there would be more sorrow there than here.

Absorbed by his reverie, Philip unintentionally repeated the words aloud. He was interrupted by a great sob at his elbow, and became aware that he was not alone in his misery.

A tall, graceful woman was standing at his elbow. As he turned she quickly averted her face, but in the brief glimpse which Philip had he thought he read the old old story that is written on a thousand faces and in a thousand hearts of our sister women in every great city in the world. Moved by the unexpected sight of kindred misery, Philip laid his hand on her arm and asked kindly,—

“Can I help you?”

“No,” she sobbed, shrinking timidly from his touch; her voice was so sweet that Philip reproached himself with having for a moment wronged her in his thoughts. He took a step nearer, and again addressed her. She turned a strikingly beautiful face to him, and scrutinized him with her great dark eyes. It was the one face of all women’s faces he would be least likely to forget, though he had seen it only once before by the moonlight as he saw it now. Involuntarily he uttered her name—

“Pearl!”

“Ah! I don’t know you, what do you want with me?” she asked petulantly.

“Only to see the tears dried out of your beautiful eyes,” Philip answered with his habitual gallantry. They were very beautiful eyes, but they looked on him now with an expression of mingled aversion and sympathy that almost made him wish he had not seen them.

“Oh, yes, my eyes are beautiful, are they? and my lips are pretty and my form is graceful! Oh, indeed! I know you are all alike. I had thought better of you, but you are all alike—all alike!”

There was something in her manner at once fierce and plaintive that induced Philip to follow her as she hastened away. He soon overtook her; she was again leaning over the parapet looking down on the swift dark tide.

"Pardon me," he said re-addressing her, "the air is cold, and it grows late. I fear you are not well, let me see you home."

"See me home—home!" she laughed wildly. "Are you tired of life that you offer to see me home?"

"Very nearly," replied Philip.

"Then come with me," she cried, and leaped on the parapet.

Swift as thought Philip's grasp was on her skirts, and he dragged her down, then drawing her arm through his he clasped the white trembling hand and so led her away.

(To be continued.)

WIDOWED MOTHER.



O-DAY a mother, yestere'en a wife,
Sad she is weeping,
Tenderly keeping,
Watch o'er the last link that binds to life.

O'er her infant fondly bending,
One tender smile her features wreath'd,
Joy with sorrow strangely blending,
When for the babe a prayer she breath'd.

Sleep, baby, peacefully—pledge of the dead!
Sleep, baby, calmly,
No one shall harm thee,
Mother and angels keep guard o'er thy bed.

F. E. L.



NOTES OF A FOUR MONTHS' VISIT TO AMERICA.

COLONIZATION and Emigration are two of the most important features of our age and country. Great Britain has become the mother of nations. Thousands on thousands annually leave our sea-girt island to people those large untenanted wastes of land in Australia, New Zealand, and America, as well as other lands; so that in course of time the jungle, affording a retreat to the wild and ferocious animal, the prairies of America, and the wilds of Australia, will resound with the hum of commerce and the anthems of religion.

The emigrant to a foreign land is an interesting individual. He is full of hope as he finally makes up his mind to leave family and home, to cut asunder the happy recollections and pleasant memories which centred around the scene of his youth and early life; for he has now determined to commence life anew far, far from home, to rise in the world, probably to acquire independence or wealth, or a name and a fame in the land in which he is to settle. And it is this hope, this blessed hope, that enables him to overcome the dreaded hour of parting with all near and dear to him, and to cast himself on his own exertions, manfully to fight the battle of life. It is this same hope that nerves the arm of the soldier in the hour of battle, enabling him to perform prodigies of valour, hope inspiring him that in the end victory and conquest will be his. It is this same hope that cheers the sailor in the storm in mid-ocean, hope inspiring him that his ship will ride out the gale, and enter in safety the desired port. It is this same hope that comforts the traveller, the scientific explorer, who, surrounded by countless dangers in an unknown land, braves them all, cheered with the conviction that in the end he may be the means of opening up the presently unknown interior of the country,

the scene of his explorations, so that the blessings of civilization and Christianity may be conveyed to the benighted natives. And it is this same hope that animates the Christian on his deathbed, who, having the hope of a blessed immortality, is not afraid to meet the last enemy, but lies on his deathbed resigned and happy, calmly waiting the hour of dissolution. Hope, blessed hope! What would the world be without it? Deprive us of it, and we would sink into despair. But hope cheers and gladdens the heart and enables us to fight against all the opposition of a cold and cheerless world, cheering us with the firm belief that in the end we shall ultimately gain the victory.

Picture in imagination the intending emigrant on the eve of his departure. His boxes are all packed up, and he prepares to pay a round of farewell visits. He visits the old familiar church in which he was baptized, and where he afterwards publicly professed his faith in Christ. With a saddened countenance he looks on the family grave containing the dust of dear departed friends. He drops a tear as he mentally exclaims, "This sacred place, I shall never look on it again. My dust will not mingle with those of my sires, but in all likelihood will be laid in the cold grave far from this!" He then visits the old familiar scenes of his past life full as they are of happy recollection. But the time of departure has arrived, and the final parting now takes place. It is full of sadness and sorrow. His friends gather round him to grasp his hand, to bid him farewell, and to wish him God-speed. One by one he grasps their hands, and with one long sad look, he exclaims, "Farewell, God bless you all!" He hurries from the sorrowful scene to the port of embarkation.

It was with feelings somewhat akin to these I have described that the writer of this article determined to leave Scotland and push his way in America. Full of high hopes of ultimate success, I bade good bye to my friends and farewell to my country. The sequel of my narrative will tell how miserably I was disappointed in the bright hopes I had entertained.

I will now proceed to give a brief account of my visit to America, of what I saw and heard during my four months'

stay in it, with some of the national customs that came under observation, and with a few remarks on America generally.

On the morning of Saturday, the 14th of August, 1875, I embarked on board the magnificent screw steamer California, about to sail for New York. The morning was wet and miserable, and I felt sad at parting with those near and dear to me, and with Scotland, the land of my birth. All was bustle and confusion on board, sailors running here, and there, and everywhere, and passengers hunting up their boxes and packages. By 9 a.m. we loosed from the quay, and slowly steamed down the river. By the time we got half way down the Clyde, the sun broke out and the surrounding scenery looked its best. We soon reached Greenock, where we anchored at 9 p.m., to wait the arrival of the cabin passengers and mails. When we got these on board we steamed for Mobile in the north of Ireland. We reached there on the morning of Sunday, and having taken on board the Irish passengers we weighed anchor, and sailed direct for New York.

As we are in imagination proceeding on our way over the wide Atlantic, let us look around and survey the goodly ship and the fellow passengers I had during the eleven days we were at sea. The steamer was as complete as ever I saw. The saloon was like a drawing-room, and all attention was paid to the comfort of the passengers. At 9 a.m. we had our breakfast, at noon our lunch, and at four o'clock our dinner. After the first day or two was over, when several of us could not be prevailed on to eat much on account of sickness, we did ample justice to the well-cooked viands set before us. The cabin passengers numbered one hundred and fifty, and between intermediate and steerage about one hundred and eighty more. The crew numbered sixty-four. Thus we had in all three hundred and ninety-four souls on board. We had a doctor, a purser, a barber, a butcher, boots I know not how many, pastry cooks, and plenty of stewards. I compared the ship to a floating hotel. Everything was in order and everything as clean and bright as silver. The order and regularity on board were perfect, and everything went on like clockwork. The passengers

were agreeable among themselves, and friendly and social intercourse was kept up throughout the voyage.

There was nothing of special interest to note during the voyage. We came on no icebergs, we saw no whales; the sea was very calm all the way, the mighty engines did their expected duty satisfactorily, and we sped on our trackless course at a rate of from 280 to 300 knots daily. On the second Sunday, having on board four ministers, we had two religious services, one in the forenoon and one at night. These were very interesting, as we all sat on the quarter deck, crowded round the minister, and then heard in mid-ocean the word of life proclaimed. The singing was peculiarly solemn as the gentle summer breeze carried the sound over the waste of water. Early on the morning of the 25th August I was awakened by the announcement that land was in sight. This joyful intelligence caused us all to rise out of our berths and have a look at the welcome sight. For some time the land was so indistinct that I could not distinguish it from the sky. But, by-and-bye I could make out the outline of Long Island, and after a few hours we had entered the bay close to the City of New York. Here we had to anchor to allow the inspecting doctor to come on board and examine us, and all being found healthy and well, we steamed on again, and about 3 p.m. cast anchor in the middle of the north river. We were next visited by the Custom House officials, who examined our bag and baggage. And then tugs came to take us to the Quay. It was about 4 p.m. when I landed on American soil. I was directed to an hotel kept by a Scotchman; and thither I went, and having got my dinner, took my first walk in the City of New York. I found myself in a busy, bustling city, surrounded by sights and sounds quite foreign to me. Next day I delivered to a firm in the city a letter of introduction I got from Scotland; and I may here add that finding that the firm could do nothing for me, I had to rely on my own individual exertions in obtaining employment, for my object in going to America was to realize the hope of finding work and making a fortune. I remained a month in New York looking for something to do, and during this time I had abundance of time to see most of the sights in the city.

New York is built on an island, and has a population of more than a million. Opposite it on the north river is the city of Jersey, and on the east river, Brooklyn, each having a local government of its own, with an aggregate population of about two millions. New York is the great centre of commerce in America. Her warehouses are very large and numerous, so are her bonded stores ; and her principal business streets are almost as full of people, well-dressed and hurried in their movements, as you would find to be were you walking in Cornhill or Cheapside, London.

I found New York a pretty, ornamental, but I cannot say a clean town. The principal streets, such as Broadway, Fifth Avenue, Wall-street, and others, are very fine, and have an ornamental appearance. Broadway is the principal street in the City. It is not so broad as I thought it would have been, but it has a great length, extending to seven miles, and very many of the buildings, public as well as private, are magnificent. I feel my incapacity to give a proper description of the really beautiful city of New York, and I will only name some of the most striking buildings that I saw.

At the end of Broadway, next the sea, are Castle Gardens, where the emigrants land, where their names are enrolled in a register, and where they are assisted if going to the West, or employment provided for them if remaining in the neighbourhood of the city. Leaving Castle Gardens, with its shady retreats, its cool air blowing off the water, and its numerous seats for the weary and fatigued, let us proceed along Broadway. The first look I had of this street was to my mind disappointing. At the end the houses are not so handsome nor the general appearance of the street so striking as after you proceed a halfmile further on. About this distance we come to the Telegraph Office with its conspicuous towers. Close by is the New Post Office, a magnificent white building, richly ornamented, and most admirably adapted for its purpose. In the immediate vicinity of the Post Office is the Court House and Sheriff's buildings, plain, unattractive, but substantial. Here also is the City Hall, a very chaste and complete building. Here also in Broadway is the wholesale department of Mr. A. D. Stewart and

some two miles further on is the retail department. These two give employment to nearly 2,000 people, and the amount of business done, as well as the wealth of the principal, is enormous. His residence in Five Avenue is the finest house in the city, built of white marble, and said to have cost 2,000,000dols. Passing along Broadway we come on several magnificent hotels, churches, and theatres. Mostly all the stores are beautifully ornamented and the houses above them large and commodious. The Central Park is well worth visiting. The Americans call it the finest in the world. Be that as it may, it is an extensive, well-laid-out piece of pleasure ground, with its numerous pieces of statuary, many of them to commemorate the lives of eminent Scotchmen, such as Scott and Burns;—with its ponds, with its many thriving trees and shrubs and pretty flowers,—with its numerous seats for the weary pedestrian to sit on, smoke his cigar, and witness the lively and richly clad visitors who throng into the Park in the afternoon.

I have said I found fault with the absence of cleanliness of many of the streets. The streets themselves are rough and uneven, at least many of them are so, and into the various holes water runs, fills them, and remains there; and not unfrequently even in August, with the temperature little less than Indian, I often have my boots dirtier by the water in these ruts being splashed upon them by a passing buggy or waggon.

It was a sight to witness the activity, especially along the two river sides. Here men of business pushed you about as though unworthy of their care, for they have not time to be impeded by the like of you. Here now and again the street was blocked up by numerous well-loaded waggons, almost all having two horses, strong and handsome, and well harnessed, or by a number of buggies, the great national gig, as you may call it, with its four wheels, its two passengers (some hold four), its roof above it to protect the traveller from the rays of the scorching sun, and with its slim build, that you would imagine that driving over the rough stones of the streets, for many of them are very rough, you would send the little light toy into a thousand pieces. But no, thanks to the American wood, which is very tough. I saw some really

fine private carriages, with handsome, high-spirited horses, richly harnessed, and driven by a coloured man, which to my idea set off to advantage the whole turn-out.

Living is expensive in New York. I paid in the hotel I lived in, which was a third or fourth rate one, for board and lodgings one pound a week. Rents are very high, so are taxes, and clothing is a full fourth or a half higher than here. Whiskey is also dear and in most cases not good. Beer also high in price. The great native beer is Lager. In almost every street there you have the tramways. You can run in a car sometimes five miles, for which you pay 2½d., or 5 cents. The city is almost covered with a network of telegraph wires: into all the principal hotels, banks, public and private offices there, you have the telegraph office, and should any theft be committed in an hotel, or news to be instantly conveyed from one public office to another, the telegraph is put in operation.

I have said I remained in New York fully a month looking for work and seeing the city. I entirely failed in obtaining employment; and this is not to be wondered at so much, when I say that in New York there are some thirty thousand people out of employment, living on public and private charity, as well as by theft. All over the States there are thousands idle and living in the same way, but there are more in New York, as it being the great landing place of all emigrants a great many of them having no money are unable to live, and wander about as I did, wondering at and admiring the sights to be seen. My money now being all spent I had no other resource than try some other city, where I might be more fortunate, or perhaps get work at some farm on the wayside. Having gone to America with the anxious desire to get work, I felt very much cast down by the unfortunate commencement I had, and I would gladly have done any work than remain idle. Having by mere chance met a Scotchman from Glasgow who was in the same predicament as myself, he and I resolved to walk to Philadelphia trying as we went along the road to get employment of any kind. We started on Saturday morning, the 28th September, and having crossed over to Jersey City took the main road to Philadelphia. We passed through several towns and villages, receiving great kindness from the people we had to call on by the

wayside, and after about ten days of a weary walk, never having the luxury of a bed at night, or proper meals by day, we came in sight of the city of Philadelphia. The distance is some 96 miles, and the general appearance of the country was very uninviting. There was a sameness about it, a large extent of ground being under marsh, and the stagnant water evolved a miasma, which often affected the inhabitants, bringing on ague, a most painful complaint. There was one part of the road that was particularly attractive. In passing Boardertown, a small, but clean and beautiful village, with its surroundings richly wooded, and the river Delaware flowing past it, on which several steamers were plying up and down, the whole scene was one on the beautiful autumn morning that I cannot easily forget. About three miles from Philadelphia our perseverance was rewarded, and we got work at a farm. Our work was husking India corn, and shuffling sand. At night we slept in a hay loft with some niggers, and we had to cook our own food. We did not much care either for our work, which we found too hard for us, or for our companions by night. We only remained a week, and just saved two or three dollars. We started now for Philadelphia. We were not long in the town before I was taken ill, the farm work being blamed for it. I had to apply for assistance to the St. Andrew's Society, a Scotch society maintained by Scotch residents to assist their fellow-countrymen who had been so foolish as to leave their native land, and who had expected doubtless to find gold lying in the streets or roads of America. This society aided me, so that I had the rest and nourishment I was so much in want of. I got a good deal better, and we now made efforts to obtain work. But all these efforts were in vain; and after remaining about ten days my friend and I finally determined to walk to Baltimore, a distance of some ninety-eight miles. But before leaving Philadelphia I would offer a few remarks about the town.

Philadelphia is a busy, commercial port, second in importance to the State of New York, with a population of about six hundred thousand. The principal street, called Chesnut, is a long and pretty one, very many of the public and private buildings being very chaste. One peculiar feature

of the American cities is their great extent. The houses are not crowded on each other as at home. There are many little parks all over the town, and along the side walks are planted rows of trees, which give a cool, refreshing, and pretty aspect to the whole city. A stranger can find his way far easier in an American city than at home. The streets all run one way and the avenues cross the streets, and the streets and avenues are for the most part straight.

The great attraction to Philadelphia this year is the Exhibition, or the Centennial as it is called. I walked out to see the buildings situated in Fairmont Park: I found there an extensive range of glass buildings, all alive with bustle and confusion. There are some six thousand workmen employed. Fairmont Park, if not equal in beauty or extent to the Central Park in New York, is yet very extensive, well laid out, diversified with hill and dale, with abundance of wood and a beautiful stream of water running past, with its many carriage drives, and innumerable quiet arbours and seats, making it a most enjoyable retreat from the bustling city around it. When all the improvements are completed that were being carried on when I saw it in and around the Centennial buildings, they will prove a great source of attraction to Philadelphia. I cannot give any description of the buildings themselves as we were not permitted to enter them; but they are most extensive, and give every promise of proving a great success. I saw the building, plain and unadorned as it is, in Chesnut-street, where the Act of Independence was signed in 1776; and it is to celebrate this great national event that the exhibition of this year has been thought of.

Philadelphia is the great Quaker City of the United States. You meet them at almost every turn you take, and most intelligent, industrious, and honourable citizens they are. This city seems more religious than New York. I saw a great number of churches, and the citizens, evidently whether or not it is that the Quaker element exists so largely among them, I don't know, but the citizens are of a more quiet, orderly, and staid character than their friends in New York. Here you have hospitals and benevolent institutions without number, as well as many schools and

seminaries of learning. I may here observe that in America the blessings of education are conveyed to the youth without fees. A tax called the education tax being imposed on the general community; so that it is impossible to find a boy or a girl who is destitute of at least the elementary principles of education. They can all read and write.

I have already said that Philadelphia is a busy town. People predict that the time is not far distant when it will have a larger population than New York, and even exceed that city as a commercial port. Be this as it may, it is growing rapidly in population and in importance, and without a doubt the Centennial Exhibition will add to its importance. Its quays are busy and crowded. Its many handsome stores are well filled with costly goods. Its chief streets are attractive and clean, and very many of its private houses at once indicate to the stranger the opulence of the owner. We take our leave of the Quaker City, wishing it every success and prosperity.

We left Philadelphia on Monday morning, the 25th October, to walk to Baltimore, a distance as I have said of 98 miles. I felt more interest in the walk than in the former one we had. The country generally was more uneven, more wooded, better cultivated, and on the way we passed some fine farms and excellent herds of cattle. After three days' walk we had entered the State of Maryland, which, as your readers are aware, was a great slave State, and Baltimore, whence I was going, was a great slave market. As we marched along the road we could not help thinking of the many unhappy beings who not very many years before had to walk manacled and chained along the same route to be sold in the Southern markets. Happily this great curse of America has now been removed, and the former miserable slave is in very many cases a contented, happy, and industrious free man, enjoying to the full all the rights and the privileges that belong to free men.

There is little to notice of any special interest in the walk to Baltimore; we suffered with sore feet and exhausted frames, as we wearily trudged on our way. One day we were stopped on the road by two men, thoroughly examined of all we possessed, a revolver, loaded I suppose, held

before us when we made resistance, and the examination over they politely apologized for the inconvenience they had put us to, told us they were detectives on the track, and supposed they had got the looked-for delinquent. We bade them adieu, glad to get away from them.

The longest journey as well as the longest night comes to an end, and very thankful were we when we reached Baltimore, for we were sadly in want of rest. As soon as we reached it we called on the St. Andrew Society, who showed us no small kindness. Owing to the long walk with the exposure I became worse than ever; but this Scotch Society kindly procured me the necessary rest and nutriment I was in want of, as well as the medical attention I required. Here I lay a week, a miserable object surrounded by strangers, with no one to care for me or to attend to my daily wants. I was strongly advised to go home, as I could not from physical incapability be of any use for a long time to come, and I made up my mind to return home some way or other. While I lay ill I was told by a young man that I might have a chance of getting employment in the Agricultural Chemical Department at Washington; as it was only forty-two miles from Baltimore I thought I would make a final attempt and probably at last get into a situation.

But before I leave Baltimore for Washington I would offer a sentence or two about it. I did not see much of it, being confined all the time. Baltimore is generally known as the Monumental City, but in my few walks I cannot say I saw so many monuments to warrant the appellation. I found it a thriving town, with several very handsome buildings, many highly ornamental churches. Its streets, by no means so long or striking as in Philadelphia, were filled with a busy throng of people, each one bent on his or her individual errand. Its stores, not so extensive as others I had witnessed, yet showed unmistakable proof of a thriving trade being done. On the streets buggies and waggons passed and met in quick succession, and when I was told that business was very dull, in fact "nothing doing" they said, I wondered when anything ever was done, for the general appearance of the streets and quays gave the stranger an idea that business

was brisk. One building that attracted my attention was the City Hall. A very large ornamental marble building, approached by two sets of magnificent stone steps meeting at the top, and leading the visitor into the large and beautifully furnished hall, with its dome, and from the hall corridors branch off to the various rooms. The whole interior is quite in keeping with the striking exterior.

Baltimore was a principal market in the north for the purchase of the unhappy slave to be sold to the dealers in the south. The release of the slave as the great result of the late war between the north and the south has been the entire ruin of the southern people, for almost their entire fortune was invested in slaves, and I understand even now that in the south a large proportion of the land is uncultivated solely from the poverty of the owners. The slave was as ignorant as any of the cattle in the fields, and had as little idea of rising in the world or bettering his condition at the time of the emancipation as the child unborn. They were looked down upon by the white man, were not allowed to sit in church with him, or occupy the same railway car. But now public opinion is entirely changed regarding them. They sit side by side anywhere and everywhere with the white man. But more than this, they even occupy positions of trust and responsibility in many of the public offices, and seem to be very faithful in the discharge of the various duties committed to their care.

After nearly a fortnight spent in Baltimore I took train for Washington, the capital of the country. This was the first time I had ever been in one of their cars. I found it far more pleasant than travelling by rail at home. We could walk from end to end of the car, and as we approach the station the conductor announces the name, as well as collects the tickets. I reached Washington on the evening of the 29th October, and next morning found my way to the Agricultural Department, a large massive, dark coloured stone building with two high towers, and situated in the middle of a large nursery with extensive greenhouses. I saw the superintendent, told him my errand, and got for answer that there was really no opening. Bitterly disappointed with my want of success I at once resolved that night to start on my

way home. But having a few hours to spare I resolved to spend them in visiting some of the sights in the city.

Washington has a population, I daresay, of from 80,000 to 100,000. I went and saw the White House, the official residence of the President of America. The house is a low two-storied one, white in colour, situated in the centre of a small farm, close to the town. President Evart, the present occupant of the house, has sat for nearly eight years in the President's chair, and although different opinions will arise regarding the public actions of the President, yet doubtless during his lengthened term of office he has been the means of doing much for the welfare and prosperity of the United States. I also visited the Treasury, a large white marble building, with its Corinthian pillars and its high flight of steps. The Home Office is something similar. But what is that large conspicuous marble building, all sparkling in the rays of the sun, at the other end of the town? That, I was told, was the Capitol, where the Senate and the House of Representatives sat. Thither I repaired to have a better look at the magnificent pile of buildings. I ascended the marble staircase leading to the entrance hall, but unfortunately had no time to enter the building. I cannot describe it. It is so large, so grand, so impressing, that to attempt a description would be folly. Suffice it to say that it is the finest building in America, and has few to be compared with it in Europe.

Washington is an old town, with many old-fashioned streets and houses. The street called Pennsylvania Avenue is an exception. It is one of the finest I have seen. It is of great length and extreme breadth. I had difficulty in distinguishing parties on opposite pavements from me. And the numerous trees planted along the pavements give a highly ornamental aspect to it.

At night I returned to Baltimore on my way to New York, and next morning I proceeded to Philadelphia by sea, having obtained a pass from the mayor. This was my first sail in an American steamer. It took us about twenty hours, and I had great comfort on the way. They are painted white, and have two covered in rooms, cosy and comfortable, having a stove in each. The crank of the engine is seen above the roof

going up and down as the engines propel her. From Philadelphia to New York I got a free pass from the St. Andrew Society, and on the 3rd November again arrived in New York, still an invalid, and still physically weak. I remained five weeks in New York making a final attempt to get work. But all to no profit, for I could not find any. By the liberality of some Scotch merchants, whom I cannot thank too much, I got my passage money paid; and on the 16th of December went on board the steamer *State of Pennsylvania* bound for Glasgow. The sail lasted eleven days, and was pleasant; but the cold some days was intense, and on Christmas Day we had a heavy fall of snow. I reached Glasgow safely on the 27th of December, and gladly found myself once more among the circle of my friends and under the laws of Queen Victoria. One or two remarks about America generally before I close.

America is a great country, and is doubtless destined to become greater. Everything within her boundaries is on a great scale. Her territorial dominion is vast; her mountains are amongst the highest in the world; her plains extend many hundreds of miles; her rivers have the greatest volume of water of any; her lakes are the largest of any; the waterfall of Niagara is unsurpassed; her cities, many of them populous and large, are busy marts of commercial enterprise, from whence the many and valuable productions of the country, such as cotton, wheat, flour, tobacco, lard, butter, and others, are conveyed in goodly ships to all parts of the world; her citizens are enterprising and industrious, many of her divines are the most eloquent of preachers; many of her statesmen are gifted with high powers of rhetoric; many of her soldiers have acquired distinguished fame in many a gory battlefield; her seminaries of learning, her many benevolent institutions for the reception of the orphan young, the aged poor and destitute, and the many hospitals for healing the sick and maimed, prove the benevolent and charitable nature of the American people.

America has had her trials and troubles like other countries. Among the most noted of these was the civil war that rent the Republic in sunder a few years ago, a war almost unequalled in the historical page, whether you take into

account the bravery and courage of her citizen soldiers or the issues involved in the conflict. The North fought for the emancipation of the slave, the South contended for maintaining the slave in his unhappy condition of bondage. In the one army was to be seen the father of a family, in the other you saw the son or the brother; for often it happened that members of the same family fought against each other. Look at the condition of the country during this civil war. The man of business had to leave his counting house, the farmer his crops and cattle, the manufacturer his mill, to fight the battles of his country. The consequence was that trade was almost suspended, that the fields lay uncultivated and waste, and that the numerous mills were stopped. But they fought on nobly and bravely, the civilized world with bated breath eagerly witnessing the struggle. And when happily it was ended, and when the chain of slavery was broken and they went free, witness the harrowing condition of many a formerly happy home. As we enter one we find a widow clad in sombre black, grieving over the loss of a husband killed in battle. We enter a second, a widow likewise presents herself to us sorrowful and sad, weeping over the loss not only of a husband, but also a son, her only son. She does not know what is to become of her, as she is left unprotected to fight the world. We enter again a third home. We find a widow and family of daughters, all dressed in the habiliments of mourning. Having been reared and nurtured in affluence, the war came and they have now lost their earthly all and plunged into the deepest poverty. But this is not all. The husband was conveyed to his home mortally wounded, and soon died a martyr for his country's cause. And these are no tales of fiction or imaginary legends, for over the States scarcely a home but had to mourn the loss of a dear member. And though eleven years have come and gone since the war was terminated, its bitter recollection is still vivid in the minds of the people. But the slave has gone free, the curse of America has been removed, and boasting tales are freely uttered of the chivalry and military glory of the Republican armies.

The American is kind, courteous to strangers, affable in manner, and polite. The man of business is long-headed,

shrewd, and speculative. The race for riches is well run in America. Often fortunes are made in a day and lost in a day. I felt much interest in visiting Wall-street and the Stock Exchange, New York, the great money centre of the country.

The energy and enterprise of the Americans are well known. The sewing machines, the tramways, and machinery and implements of all kinds, as well as many other articles of use and service, owe their origin to the inventive genius of the American mind.

But although there is much in America for any one to imitate and admire, there are others that we cannot congratulate them upon at all. The laws as they exist in the States book are good and just, but unfortunately they are not acted up to, and often ignored. In New York the number of acts of violence committed every night was something appalling, and your life was by no means safe at any time. Bribery and corruption prevail everywhere. A man with money having committed a crime is almost certain of escaping the ends of justice, and in the local elections as well as for a seat in the House of Representatives bribery and corruption are universally present. A very startling incident occurred in New York shortly before I left which may not be uninteresting to the readers of your magazine. One Tweed, commonly called Bos Tweed, who was once Mayor of New York, and who during his term of office appropriated some 6 or 7 millions of dollars of the public funds, was apprehended and lodged in gaol, where he remained until lately. During his confinement he was permitted to receive callers, and to take drives in his carriage and call at his family mansion sometimes to drive with his wife and friends. On one occasion he took his accustomed drive, accompanied as usual by two warders, and called to see his wife. He then somehow or other, that has never been found out, escaped from his two custodiers, and has not since been seen or heard of. The peculiar manner of his escape leads us to form the opinion that bribery had been resorted to. However, Bos Tweed, the greatest criminal America has seen for a long time, as the public papers speak about him, has escaped from the justice his crime so richly merited.

The climate of America is variable. In the Northern States the cold of winter is intense and the heat of summer is oppressive. But in the Southern States, such as Georgia, Florida, South Carolina and California, the weather is a perpetual summer. The cold in New York in December when I left was the keenest I ever felt, and you will find the ground covered with snow in the middle of April.

I would have enjoyed much to have lived in America if I had got employment. But I soon discovered that was almost impossible owing to the dulness of trade in all departments and over all the country. The cause of the dulness is a general want of confidence; and also a reactionary movement following in the wake of a number of years of unsurpassed prosperity. But when confidence is restored, prosperity and activity will again attend the exertion of the man of business. And although I failed to find a home beyond the Atlantic, I have, I trust, learned much, as I saw during my brief visit a good deal. There is nothing better for anyone, especially for a young man, than to visit other lands, being an eyewitness of their manners and customs, for he will have abundance to occupy his attention and often to call forth his admiration.

We take our leave of the great Republic of America, congratulating her on the rapid rise and progress she has made since Columbus first discovered the land about 300 years ago, and we earnestly hope she may have a bright and glorious future, that benevolent effort may be extended and increased, that Christianity may be more disseminated, and that her citizens, from the President downwards, may ever stand forth to the world as men of integrity, honour and morality. A. W. C.





WHAT WILL SOCIETY SAY?

A NOVEL.

By MERVYN MERRITON,

Author of "Romances of the Chivalric Ages," "The Ringwoods of Ringwood," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIX.

BETWEEN Luttrell, Mrs. Leadstone's own maid and housekeeper, and Gibson, Juliana's particular attendant, there existed a chronic condition of smothered hostility.

Luttrell was encouraged by her mistress to play the spy upon Juliana. Gibson knew this, and Luttrell knew that Gibson knew it. Gibson was a straightforward, honest girl; Luttrell a mean-spirited, artful woman, whom Gibson despised as much as she disliked; but the straightforwardness of the younger, was hardly fit to cope, on all occasions, with the cunning of the elder, domestic. Thus it happened that during the housekeeper's-room breakfast, next morning, Juliana's intention of driving down to the pier before luncheon oozed out. Had Gibson known the great importance attached by "Missus" to the piece of information she had instructed Luttrell to obtain on this apparently trifling subject, the girl would have bitten her tongue in two sooner than have uttered a word about it.

Mrs. Leadstone's first act, on receiving this intelligence, was to send word to Juliana that she did not feel equal to coming down to breakfast, and would have a cup of tea and a slice of dry toast sent up to her room. An hour later Juliana received a second message from her mother to the intent

that she was still in bed, and meant to remain there, having slept badly, feeling positively ill from one of her very worst headaches, and hoped Juliana would come up and sit with her.

"I'm afraid, dearest, it's one of my regular attacks of neuralgia," Mrs. Leadstone said, in a voice scarcely above a whisper, when Juliana came. "It will pass away after a couple of hours' rest and quiet—but I can't bear to be left alone—you know my dread of loneliness."

"I'll gladly stay with you, mamma," Juliana replied.

"Thanks, my love—my own!—give me your hand—my sweet one!—To know you are near is all I require. But I won't make quite a prisoner of you. Here you can't see to do anything"—for the room was darkened—"Have your work, or your drawing, or a book, in the dressing room."

Whereupon Juliana, not thoroughly comfortable under the recollection of previous "attacks" of a similar nature, fetched her drawing materials, and installed herself in the dressing room. She had been there a short time only when the question proceeded from the bed, "What o'clock is it, darling?" "Eleven, mamma—and, Oh dear!"—this to herself—"in an hour *he* will be looking for me on the pier!"

Half an hour having passed in silence, Juliana crept softly into the bedroom, hoping to find that dear mamma might have dropped asleep.

But dear mamma was awake—wide awake. Oh! thoroughly wide awake!

"Sit still, my love," she whispered; "the slightest sound goes through my wretched head like rolling thunder. I implore you not to move!"

Juliana sighed, and returned, not to her drawing, for which she felt no inclination, but to the unpleasant reflections which had now begun to possess her mind, and which found their expression in the words, "No walk for me before the afternoon!" For she still consoled herself with the reflection that, as the maternal nervous attacks seldom outlived the hour of luncheon, (Mrs. Leadstone's favourite meal,) and as the day seemed likely to remain fine, her walk was but deferred.

Half-past One, however, came without bringing any signs

of dear mamma's intention to rise. She continued to lie in a state (to all appearance) of alternate drowsiness and nervous excitability.

Luncheon being announced, she told Juliana to go down, and send her up some chicken with etceteras. The chicken consumed, a cutlet followed. Then went up some calves' foot jelly (deliciously flavoured), the whole moistened by a pint of champagne (Perier Jouet).

"Thank goodness, mamma is picking up!" thought Juliana. "She'll presently be herself, and relieve me from my post." Upon the strength of which hope she ordered the carriage at Three.

The order thus given was duly reported at head quarters by the watchful Luttrell.

When Juliana went upstairs expecting that Mrs. Leadstone would be dressing, she was astonished to find her still in bed, with the curtains drawn around her, and the room in deeper darkness than ever.

"Aren't you going to get up, mamma?" she asked.

"Don't talk of my getting up;" was the answer. "I'm distracted with pain. I could hardly touch a morsel. I was just about to send and beg you'll on no account leave me, my own precious one!"

"Oh! mamma, I hope you're not so bad as you imagine. I do really want a little fresh air after our dinner party—the rooms were so hot last night!"

Mrs. Leadstone chuckled within herself, as she thought, "Oh yes, I've no doubt last night's party engendered the desire for the pier to-day!" But she said nothing, while Juliana continued, "You won't mind Luttrell staying with you, so that I may go out for a short walk, mamma. I'll promise you not to stay away above an hour and a half."

"Do I hear rightly?" Mamma found strength almost to scream. "Will you desert me, my child?"

"Desert is a harsh term, mamma! I only proposed"—

"My love, for pity's sake no explanations! If you mean to leave me alone on what—for aught you or I know—may prove to be a bed of sickness, do so! Go!—go! But go in silence. I want no reason. I am quite unequal to hear reasons—Oh! Oh!" Here followed the sounds, first of a

suppressed and quasi heart-broken sob; then as of the sobber's person turning (her back probably upon Juliana) in the bed.

Poor Juliana required no further explanation. All these symptoms pointed unmistakably to the indefinite prolongation of her imprisonment. In silence she returned to the dressing room, and sat down in an arm chair, very much disposed for a fit of crying herself.

"What a fatality!" she thought. "Oh! If mamma could but have had her attack any day but this!—Thursday—and to-morrow he leaves Boulogne! Perhaps, though, if I remain very quiet, mamma may get better before it is too late for me to go out." And from half-past Two to Four she sat perfectly still, with a piece of embroidery rather on her lap than in her hands. Then she rose, entered the bed-room, and tremblingly asked, "Are you better now, mamma?"

"Rather, my sweet one. What o'clock is it?"

"Just Four."

"So late! I must have been asleep. It is that which has so refreshed me. Do you know, Juliana, I think a little air would nearly set me right. I'll get up, and we'll drive out towards the country. Ring the bell, dearest. Thanks. Now you may go down; and you can give orders about the carriage—say in an hour." Then, as Juliana despondently quitted the room, she added to herself sardonically, "Of course a certain young gentleman has been awaiting your arrival, for many hours, on the pier. The appetite he'll get may make him enjoy his dinner, and thus compensate him for his disappointment!"

Thereupon Mrs. Leadstone rose with alacrity, and by the time Luttrell arrived was deep in the mysteries of her matronly toilet.

"Well, that is like you, ma'am!" Luttrell exclaimed, affecting a surprise she was far from feeling, well behind the scenes as she was in these matters. "I never seed any lady throw off illness, so to speak, as you do. You're a wonder for resolution, you are, and that's what I always says to Doctor Blobb,"—for Blobb, general practitioner of Ringwoodian memory, ass and ignoramus as he is, has recently

contrived to get a certain footing as a London M.D.—“and the Doctor’s quite of my mind.”

“Well, don’t talk, Luttrell!” Mrs. Leadstone said impatiently. “There’s no time for talking. You know we’re going to the theatre to-night. Now, mind you let us have dinner punctually at half-past six.”

“Yes, ma’am. But you won’t be able to get much of a drive.”

“Quite as much as I want,” Mrs. Leadstone replied significantly.

As the carriage, with the two ladies, was about to leave the Château, a commissionnaire arrived, bearing a note for “Madame,” which, he said, required no answer.

“Oh! what a pretty attention!” “Madame” exclaimed, with well feigned astonishment, after reading the note; “Mr. Cotherstone sends us a box for the theatre to-night. Here’s the programme—your favourite *Marta*. We must shorten our drive. Edward, go back and tell Luttrell to be sure and let us have dinner punctually at half-past six.”

“But, mamma, are you sufficiently recovered to go to the theatre?” asked Juliana.

“You know I never think of myself, dearest. I feel sure it will please you, and that’s enough for me,” Mrs. Leadstone replied, throwing herself back in the carriage, with a self-sacrificing air.

Juliana was on the point of answering that, as far as she was concerned, she had no great wish to avail herself of Mr. Cotherstone’s “pretty attention,” but checked herself, as the possibility occurred to her of seeing Frank at the theatre.

It is hardly to be supposed that Mrs. Leadstone could have read on Juliana’s countenance the sort of argument she was then holding with herself; but that astute parent saw there enough of general perturbation to suggest to her the policy of avoiding any reference to irritating subjects during the drive.

CHAPTER XX.

WITHOUT attempting to describe Frank Aylesmere's mental condition when, after fruitlessly walking, sitting, and standing, by turns, on the West pier for nearly half a dozen hours he returned to the Hôtel des Bains to dress for dinner, let it suffice to relate that he then found on his table a note thus addressed :

Monsieur Francis Aylesmere.—Important.

The contents proved to be as follows :

If you go to the theatre to-night, look out for somebody in Box 6.

Although the paper was of the finest quality, and highly perfumed, the handwriting was that of a person as yet in the pupillage of penmanship. The missive, however, imparted instant solace to the reader's spirit, for he divined that it pointed to nothing less than a meeting with Juliana at the place of amusement indicated.

The curtain has just fallen upon the first act of *Maria*.

The French portion of the audience has, after the French fashion, poured from the *salle* into the *couloirs* and the neighbouring *cafés*. The occupants of Box 6, four in number, with other English in other parts of the theatre, remain immoveable at their posts.

Mrs. Leadstone and Juliana are in front, Lord Windlesham sits behind Mrs. Leadstone, Claude Cotherstone—sober only by reason of fraternal supervision of the *carte des vins*—behind Juliana. The elder lady turns winningly and graciously *towards* his Lordship; Juliana, saving when she is absolutely obliged to answer a question, turns pertinaciously *from* his Lordship's brother.

The conversation between the former pair flows smoothly and without intermission, that between the latter laboriously and languidly. Indeed, Juliana's icy bearing and impatience of Claude's vicinity are perceptible not only to her

mother and Lord Windlesham, but—which is still more extraordinary—to Claude himself, irresistible and all conquering as he believes himself to be.

It is worth while to give a specimen of this party's quadrilogue, which is carried on, now in single speeches, now after the manner, so to speak, of the *ensembles* of the singers on the stage.

Lord Windlesham : Well, Mrs. Leadstone, to return to the question of provisions where we left it before that noisy chorus, we'll take poultry, if you please.

Mrs. Leadstone : But, my Lord, you had not done with fish.

Lord W. : I established the fact that all the really good fish comes from England. Poultry, then—Now let me tell you that, after walking through the market, and talking with all the dealers and as many of the market women as could speak French, I find poultry—quality for quality—quite as dear here as in London.

Mrs. L. : Pretty much what I have heard from my house-keeper, my Lord.

Lord W. (with a growl) : Oh, don't talk to me of house-keepers ! Ladies who wish to have no share in bringing their husbands to ruin should judge of prices for themselves. At least, I know *we* can't afford to trust blindly to servants.

Mrs. L. : I think I shall ask your Lordship to escort me through the market one day.

Lord W. : Very happy—if I stay long enough. (*Here he glances at Juliana.*) By the bye, do you think I shall have much difficulty in getting a certain person away from the attractions of Boulogne ?

Mrs. L. (*impatiently and rather viciously*) : You may judge for yourself, Lord Windlesham !

Honble. Claude : Did you—Aw—drive out to-day, Miss Leadstone ?

Juliana : We did.

Honble. Claude : Walk as well ?

Juliana : I did not.

Honble. Claude : Thought so—Aw—was on the pier myself—West pier, you know.

Juliana (*evincing some interest*) : The West pier, did you say ?

Honble. Claude : Yes. Saw that young man at a distance. You know——

Juliana (sharply) : Young man !

Honble. Claude : Don't know his name—Aw—Dined at the Château.

Juliana : Do you mean the Vicomte de Foix ?

Honble. Claude : No. He's—Aw—any age you please—except young. I mean that—that—Mr. Leadstone's sort of protégé.

Juliana (reddening) : Protégé ! I don't in the least understand you.

Honble. Claude : In some Government office—Aw—Mrs. Leadstone asked me if—Aw—I say Mrs. Leadstone asked me if—aw—my brother couldn't do something for him.

Juliana (with burning cheeks and flashing eyes) : You must have mistaken mamma's meaning, Mr. Cotherstone. I am quite sure Mr. Aylesmere does not want Lord Windlesham or anybody else to do anything for him.

Honble. Claude (rather taken aback) : I beg your pardon—What did you say was his name ?

Juliana : Mr. Aylesmere—Francis Aylesmere—my father bought Lentworth from his brother.

Honble. Claude : Very likely. But—Aw—we must be—Aw—talking of two different persons.

Juliana : I suppose we are—it doesn't matter. Hark ! The bell ! People will be coming back for the second act—*(then to herself)*—I hope *he* will return—I'm sure I saw him looking in at that door opposite, towards the end of the act.

Honble. Claude (to himself) : Somehow we don't seem getting on together first rate to-night—perhaps it's because I—confound old Win's stinginess ! Bottle or two of champagne might have put me up to the mark.

It would seem that the conversation had by this time flagged also between his lordship and Mrs. Leadstone ; for the latter was perpetrating a surreptitious yawn behind her fan, and was thus prevented from seeing that, among a number of persons now thronging into the fauteuil's d'orchestre, was one who had not only attracted Juliana's attention, but

had obtained from that young lady a direct and pointed recognition.

Claude had observed the movement of her head, and followed its direction.

"Why, there *is* the young man!" he said this time, not to Miss, but to Mrs. Leadstone.

"What young man?" she asked.

"Why, the—Aw—you know—the meritorious young **man** about whom——"

Here Juliana broke in with, "Mr. Cotherstone is alluding to Mr. Aylesmere, mamma. Don't you see him in the stalls bowing to you?"

"Mr. Aylesmere!" exclaimed Mrs. Leadstone with feigned indifference. "Indeed! Ah! I see him." Upon which she bowed haughtily and coldly to Frank.

Lord Windlesham, who had not only listened to these observations between mother and daughter, but had carefully noted the countenances of one and the other, said to himself, "Blessed if there isn't a screw loose in Claude's business!" Then he added aloud to Juliana in a careless tone, "The gentleman who bowed to you is staying at the *Hôtel des Bains*. What did you say is his name?"

"Aylesmere—Mr. Francis Aylesmere," she answered; then turning full round upon Claude, she said, "You see, Mr. Cotherstone, we were *not* talking of two different persons."

"No no—I—Aw—see it now," Claude said. "Win, he must be a brother of Geoff Aylesmere, who came to terrible grief a few years ago."

"I remember, Claude—fine property in Middleshire."

"Our property now," Mrs. Leadstone put in uneasily—"Lentworth. My husband bought it of the family. Ah! the second act;" and drawing a breath of relief at the timely intervention of the ascending curtain, she sat back in her chair, as if abandoning herself to a lyric extacy, though, in point of fact, music had scarcely any, if any, charms to soothe her breast.

Juliana's enjoyment of the delicious second act, now that he whom she had begun more and more to regard as the chosen of her heart was present, knew no bounds. Claude could not see her countenance, but Lord Windlesham had a

side view of it which filled him with dismay. "What an ass Claude must be!" he thought. "At all events I won't let him get any deeper into the mire." And presently, while the attention of both ladies was directed to the stage, he wrote on a leaf, torn from his memorandum book, these words, "Leave the box after this act, and watch, unseen yourself, what passes in it!" which leaf he quietly slipped into Claude's hands.

The act finished, Claude, saying he would take a look round the theatre, left the box. Lord Windlesham engaged Mrs. Leadstone in conversation, while at the same time he carefully observed Juliana's movements. He then distinctly saw her telegraph to Frank, who quickly obeyed the summons, and made his appearance in the box.

Mrs. Leadstone, as we know, never introduced anybody to anybody; but Juliana, with a degree of self-possession which, for all her excitability, she could sometimes seize from very desperation, said, "Mr. Aylesmere—Lord Windlesham. I think Lord Windlesham knew your late brother."

Lord Windlesham, a man of the world and a gentleman, vexed as he was at the verification of his worst fears on Claude's behalf, took Frank's hand with stereotyped cordiality, and told him he remembered poor old Geoff well—was happy to make his acquaintance—and so on. Frank dropped into the chair vacated by Claude; but widely different was the attitude now assumed by Juliana from what it had been during Claude's occupation of the same seat. Mrs. Leadstone boiled with indignation, while Lord Windlesham smiled in spite of his vexation, as one and the other marked this difference.

Juliana, of a soft and tender nature, but highly nervous temperament, was in most things influenced—almost dominated by her mother; she was, however, apt, in certain exceptional cases, to be roused to an unnecessary display of independence. For such a display—between the joy she experienced at Frank's arrival, the suspicion now beginning to dawn upon her that she had been deliberately cheated by her mother out of her meditated walk in his society, and the aversion till this moment inspired in her by Claude Cotherstone's presence—she was thoroughly wrought up. Mrs.

Leadstone read her state of mind at a glance; but, wise in her generation, she lost not a moment in throwing oil on the rising waves.

"I'm so glad you happened to come to the theatre, Mr. Aylesmere," she said, with her blandest smile. "But for the shortness of our notice, I should have sent you word we were coming"—Here Lord Windlesham, well knowing the lie she told, could not refrain from thrusting his tongue into the cheek averted from her—"Juliana will tell you how wretchedly ill I've been all the morning—Quite a resurrection to-night, I assure you. But 'music, heavenly maid!' You know the line. I could not resist the attraction of Flotow, and Juliana was so anxious to know how a French artist would sing 'The Last Rose of Summer.' Poor darling! I kept her a prisoner the whole day—only time for the shortest drive possible. I know what the loss of her walk on the West pier is to her. I dare say *you* can appreciate its loss equally, for I believe the West pier is a favourite walk with you."

Having thus shown the end of the claw beneath the velvet paw, Mrs. Leadstone, turning the other way, resumed her conversation with Lord Windlesham, whereby Juliana and Frank were left to themselves for full five minutes.

The result of the glances which Claude's brother cast at them from time to time was thus expressed to himself, "Claude is simply wasting his time. I wouldn't give him three sous for his chance!"

At the sound of the bell for the third act, Frank rose to depart. Juliana gave him her hand with undisguised warmth, saying in a manner that savoured slightly of defiance, "Then we shall expect you in the morning. Mamma, Mr. Aylesmere has promised to come and see us, before he leaves, to-morrow."

"Pray do, Mr. Aylesmere." Thus Mrs. Leadstone, who had the sense to realize the truth that her only hope consisted in gaining time, and waiting for what the chapter of accidents might have in store for her.

The last act was nearly over when Claude returned angry and heated. The first condition arose from the fact that, following Win's advice, he had, himself invisible,

watched box 6 from the opposite side of the *salle*; the second, that he had sought to obliterate the recollection of the spectacle witnessed in box 6 by tossing off—at his own proper cost—a pint of champagne.

While the brothers, after seeing the ladies to their carriage, walked to their hotel, they discussed the events of the evening after the following fashion.

"Well, Claude," Win began, "I did not think you could be such a blessed idiot as I find you have shown yourself."

"Bless it, Win, not quite that—Aw—not quite that—you remember I told you she was a shy filly."

"Shy! She's a regular bolter. Never, no never will you bring the handsome thing to the post at St. George's, or Saint—Any-body-else's."

"Think so, really, Win?"

"That's my firm conviction, Claude—of course you'll do as you like."

"Well, you know, Winny, I generally do. But time, dear boy—time and patience may help me—I must say—Aw—she did carry it on rather with that young Aylesmere to-night."

"To-night! But it appears he dined at the Château yesterday. Where were your eyes then?"

"Where they are now. But upon my life I saw nothing. Truth is I didn't think at all about him. Artful mother quite pooh-poohed him. Suspect she knew more than she liked to tell about this case of spoon. I never even heard his name——"

"I suppose you didn't ask it?"

"No—why should I? Took him for a sort of poor relation. But after all, Win, it may turn out nothing more than a bit of flirtation with a good looking—Aw—sentimental sort of fellow. And then it's not to be supposed that these people will stand a—Aw—a chap, for their son-in-law, with neither money nor position."

"Bless it, Claude, what can they do if their daughter has a will of her own, and holds on to her fancy?"

"Ah! There it is, Win! *If* she has a will of her own! Now you must—Aw—give me credit for knowing the ways of the

house a little better than you do. Well, it's my conviction that—Aw—when all's said and done, there's only one will in the house—Mrs. Leadstone's!"

"She certainly does seem what they call here a *mâtresse femme*; and if it's as you say, there may be just a ray of hope for you, because there's no earthly doubt about your being *her* candidate for the Ladies' Stakes. But this I can see plainly; Aylesmere or no Aylesmere—and by-the-bye it appears he's going away to-morrow—you'll do yourself more harm than good by putting in an appearance at the Château for the present. There are cases in which a man's absence is more useful to him than his presence; and here's one. Therefore, we'll determine to sail to-morrow with the ebb tide, it serves early—say half-past Nine. You'll have to be stirring at the tremendous hour of Eight."

"You must be aware, my sweetest love, that not without good reason would I check that naturalness which, in common with others, I so much admire in you." It was thus that Mrs. Leadstone, carefully blending solemnity with suavity, addressed Juliana, as they sat in the drawing-room, on the following morning; "and therefore you will give me credit for a strong conviction on the subject, when I tell you that last night you positively carried naturalness to the verge of—of— a word I hesitate to use as applicable to my own daughter, yet I am compelled to use it—of indiscretion! Your rudeness—there's no milder term—to Mr. Cotherstone was as palpable as was your gushingness—another unpleasant word—to Mr. Aylesmere. Observe, my love, I don't pretend to be any more blind to the trifling defects of manner in the former than to the attractive qualities of the latter. But then, just for a moment compare the present and prospective social positions of the two! Mr. Cotherstone is—Mr. Cotherstone, and will in all human probability, be—Earl of Battleborough with fifty or sixty thousand a year! Mr. Aylesmere is——"

What status, present or prospective, Mrs. Leadstone intended to assign in this case was never known; for here Phibbs entering, announced "Mr. Aylesmere, Ma'am."

Instantly, consummate actress as she was, her counten-

ance became radiant with smiles ; she rose as readily as did Juliana, and advanced to welcome the visitor with no less apparent cordiality.

Nothing occurred worthy of record during the visit, which, however pleasing in itself to Juliana, entirely failed to realize the results she had, in her enthusiasm, and reckoning without her dear Mamma, anticipated from it. She had looked forward to nothing less than a *tête-à-tête* with Frank, in the course of which she could explain Claude Cotherstone's exact position in the house—her mother's wishes respecting him—her own utter abhorrence of his pretensions and of himself. She had even imagined the contingency of some outspoken demonstration of Frank's feelings towards herself, with, it might be, reciprocal expressions on her own part. In short, there were no bounds to the flight which her imagination had taken by anticipation, regarding this famous farewell visit of the hero of her pretty romance.

Aware of the hour of Frank's leaving Boulogne, Juliana knew that his stay at the Château would, at the outside, extend but to half an hour, and accordingly she kept a watchful eye on the clock.

Scarcely had he been in the room ten minutes when she asked him if he would like to hear her sing "The Last Rose of Summer," as a souvenir of the previous night's opera.

Of course nothing would give him greater pleasure. She knew music, on the whole, bored her mother rather than otherwise, and experienced a scintilla of hope that the good lady might take her departure at the sound of the opening chords.

But no!—Mrs. Leadstone took up some embroidery, and though frowning rather than smiling, sat firm, like patience on a monument. She was on guard, and meant to remain so till Mr. Frank should take his departure.

The lovely song, exquisitely sung, ended, and applauded with moistened eye by the enraptured visitor, Mrs. Leadstone laid down her work, summoned him, by some trivial question to her side, and at once engaged him in a conversation meant to last—as it did—till the end of his visit. She had no difficulty in attaining her object, for she possessed the

art of talking fluently about anything or nothing, as was natural in the case of a woman who to a really good education added a considerable knowledge of the world, and who read every week day a couple of newspapers, plus "The Court Journal" on Sundays.

Of course, her tactics were as obvious to Frank as they were to Juliana ; but the evil, recognized by both, was absolutely irremediable by either, while neither could justly complain of it.

The farewell at length bidden to Frank by the mother was outwardly as cordial as that of the daughter.

If the innermost thoughts of the two could have been laid bare, while Juliana's would thus have been softly whispered, "Farewell, beloved of my heart—May the time come when we shall meet to part no more !" Mrs. Leadstone's would have been hissed forth in the following terms, "Farewell, detested interloper ! may you never again cross my path !"

Which of these two aspirations was the one destined for fulfilment ?

CHAPTER XXI.

A WEEK has elapsed since Frank Aylesmere left Boulogne, and once more we find him stretched in an arm-chair in his friend Heartly's studio, with a volume of Shakespeare in his hand, while the young painter alternately works and talks to him.

He had reached London in a somewhat confused mental condition, hardly able to say—had anyone asked him—whether his passage from Boulogne had been quick or slow, rough or smooth, or how long a time he had passed on the railway between Folkestone and London. Arrived there, he had almost mechanically driven to Beaubois' lodging-house—now known as "The Maison Beaubois"—where he had found that every room was engaged, but had been told by the *ci-devant* François that Monsieur Oldham and Made-

moiselle Duhamel being absent from town for a short time, he might—on the score of his former intimacy with them—provisionally occupy one of their bedrooms. So he had, with the facile indifference engendered partly by his erratic mode of life, partly by the craving he felt for friendly sympathy, abandoned himself to Heartly and Heartly's ways. Here, then, he is, "for all the world, dear fellow"—Heartly tells him—"as if you had never left us and the arts to get among those aristocrats and plutocrats you've been telling me about!"

For Frank had told Heartly all the Boulogne occurrences, from his first introduction to Juliana Leadstone at the ball to his final and very unsatisfactory parting from her at the Chateau R. Heartly, who was, as a rule, outspoken of his advice when he had formed a very decided opinion, felt on the present occasion to a certain extent tongue-tied, as will be easily comprehended when the following rather complicated situation is considered.

Heartly himself loved Marie Duhamel—intensely—devotedly—with the single-hearted passion of a lonely artist replete with the sense of all that was beautiful, whether moral or material. He knew that not only did Marie not return his love, but that secretly, and scarcely avowing it to herself, she loved Frank Aylesmere. Now, here was Frank making confession to him of the love—adoration—life-long devotion—and what not?—which he had vowed to Juliana—Juliana being the friend as well as the pupil of Marie.

But, fortunately for Heartly, there was a view to be taken of the position into which circumstances had drawn Frank, wholly foreign to the delicate questions involving so deeply his own feelings. To that view, when we now find the friends sitting together in the studio, Heartly has been and still is endeavouring to draw Frank's serious attention.

"No doubt, you'll tell me," Heartly says, laying down his brush, as he does when any point of more than ordinary importance has to be urged, "that I'm horribly didactic; but I can't, for the life of me, get over two ugly facts; the first is that you seem letting yourself be pushed on by these zealous friends, playing yourself rather a secondary part. I'll accept, as a matter of faith, all you say about your ador-

able Juliana. I'll believe in the depth of your passion for her. I'll admit the flavour of romance which hangs about the affair; but it's quite clear that you never would have thought seriously of Juliana Leadstone if the way had not been smoothed for you by others as it has been. Now we all know that the initiative in love is not only man's prerogative, but is exacted from him in support of the dignity of his sex."

"Oh, come, Abel, you're putting too fine a point upon it. You ought to take the case as one in which circumstances have been exceptionally in my favour. Remember that my admiration for Juliana dates from our meeting at the ball, when I had no idea who she was, and when indeed, if I had known her name I should probably rather have avoided her than not, simply because of the unpleasant associations connected with that name."

"Well, Frank, say I give you the benefit of this doubt. Next we come to difficulty number two. We've often glanced at it—in fact it's the one really dark cloud over the whole affair—I mean the——"

"Money part of the affair," Frank broke in. "I know! I know! A dark cloud indeed!"

"That is what I mean, Frank. Men of the world—even such as I take Mr. Cotherstone to be judging from your description of him—would ridicule any such sensitiveness as you, with your independent spirit, must feel at the notion of going pennyless—for it's nothing less than that!—into the house of these enormously rich people. You'll be told it's done every day by men with the blood of the crusaders in their veins. Hundreds of fellows set their pedigrees against the bankers' accounts of vulgarians, and matrimonial bargains are struck as open market transactions. But, Frank, my friend, you are not of the nature of these men, and I cannot imagine your condescending to become indebted to your father-in-law—Perhaps it would be more to the point to say mother-in-law!—for the payment of your tailor and your bootmaker. Aha! I see, Frank, I've touched you there!"

Yes, he had. He had placed his finger on the rankling wound in Frank's high nature. He had boldly done that which Frank, with the lovely image of Juliana before

him, had not himself ventured to do—brought him face to face with the single unworthy element pervading the whole of this Leadstone business; and standing thus face to face with it, Frank saw the long vista of deep humiliations to which he must inevitably be exposed by the sinister influences of Juliana's mother.

The silence with which Frank received his honest friend's observations was more eloquent than any admission of their truth could have been; and Heartly, at once quitting that portion of the subject, turned to one of his favourite themes, the beauty of art in itself, and its worthiness as a means of acquiring fame and fortune. There being nothing particularly novel either in his arguments or his treatment, we need not follow them. Enough that they had the desired effect upon Frank's artistic nature, and that his mobile character was influenced by them, as it was apt, more or less, to be by the last word addressed to him on any subject whereon he had not quite made up his mind. His firmness of purpose was very soon put to the test. The next morning brought him two letters, immediately concerning him, addressed to A. Heartly, Esq., A.R.A.

Here they are :—

— Street, Covent Garden,

Dear Sir,

— August, 186—

Where is Mr. P. Francis? I have a most excellent two months' engagement to offer him first at Edinburgh, then at Glasgow. It will net him £60 a week. But it won't keep 48 hours! Pray let me have his address by return, if possible. Mr. Gainsborough, the manager, is in London, and leaves by this night's mail train.

Yours faithfully,

D. TILSON.

Westwood Hall, Market Dimborough.

Sir,

— August, 186—

Our mutual friend, Frank Aylesmere, named you to me as one from whom I could at any time obtain his address. May I ask you to let me have it at your earliest convenience?

Yours very faithfully,

MILES BERRINGTON.

"Now," thought Heartly, as he placed these two letters in Frank's hand, "to see what counsel sleep has brought! The bane and antidote are both before him!"

Frank read first Miles Berrington's letter, then Tilson's, and immediately, as if afraid to trust himself to a single minute of hesitation, exclaimed, "Abel,—I'll answer Tilson myself, accepting this engagement blindly. You must write to Miles Berrington for me—the day after to-morrow, when you can give my address at Edinburgh."

"Ah!" cried Heartly, taken by surprise at this promptitude. "You'll go without seeing your old friends?"—pointing upwards.

"Humph! I had forgotten that Marie and her step-father return to-morrow. I should certainly like to see them—particularly Marie."

Heartly turned away. "Ah! and how she would like to see you!" the good fellow was thinking. "Dear Marie! would not *she* back my arguments!" He hardly knew whether to grieve for Marie or to rejoice for himself, when Frank said, "No, Abel, all delays are dangerous. I won't stay, even to see Marie Duhamel!" And he sat down at the writing table.

In five minutes Frank had written a letter notifying to Tilson his acceptance of the engagement, and appointing a meeting with Mr. Gainsborough for the same afternoon.

Heartly heard nothing of Frank for nearly a fortnight, when he received a letter from Edinburgh.

The young actor wrote thus:—

"Great success, Dear Friend! Professional details when we meet. I have to record that the temptation from which I fled hither has, to a certain extent, followed me. It comes in the shape of a reminder from Miles Berrington that I have promised myself to him for Christmas. The Vicomte de Foix, well-known to you by report, is to be at Westwood, and M. B. desires me to forward you an invitation to join the party. I trust you will accept it. I should like you to paint the evergreen old fellow's portrait. I myself shall not

return to London, but work my way down to Middleshire by the 20th December or thereabouts."

"No mention of Juliana Leadstone," Heartly thought; "but it's quite clear she looms in the distance of this Middleshire Christmas. Frank will have put money in his purse. With a few hundreds in hand, who shall say how venturesome he may not become?"

One afternoon, about the middle of October, an equipage, such as was rarely noted in the locality save as a passing meteor, might have been seen drawn up at the *Maison Beaubois*. It was no other than Mrs. Leadstone's town chariot. Mr. Holmes sat at such an elevation that his wig was on a level with the drawing-room balcony, and as the magnificent greys proudly stretched out their clean sinewy fore legs, the ground they covered nearly equalled the entire frontage of the house. Edward, who under the influence of Boulogne air had decidedly increased in bulk, about filled the door way, while, as he stood on the step, his gold-headed cane seemed of proportions to support the lintel, had either of the side pieces given way. Fortunately, there was no knocker, or it is impossible to say what might have been the effect produced on the edifice by Edward's mighty rat-tat-tat. London knockers, as an institution, have ceased to exist, but when a London footman does come across one, in an old-fashioned house, he seizes the opportunity to practise with a vengeance that Jeamesian accomplishment which threatens soon to be numbered with the lost arts.

Informed by Beaubois in person that *Mademoiselle Duhamel* was *chez elle*, Edward proceeded to open the carriage door and let down the steps, revealing the presence of Juliana unaccompanied by her mother. Marie had quitted her piano on hearing the carriage stop, and seeing who her visitor was, stood at the open drawing-room door to welcome her dear pupil and friend.

"Darling Marie! So glad to have caught you at home for a nice long chat!"

"How kind of you to come and see me, dear Miss Leadstone!"

And the girls, after affectionately kissing one another, are seated on the sofa together.

"What a pretty little place you have here!" said Juliana, whose first visit it was; "and how bright and cheerful everything looks! You have knick-knacks by the dozen. Presents from your admirers—admirers of your art, I mean, and your Erard Grand fills half the room."

"Well, Miss Leadstone——"

"Call me Juliana; I always call you Marie. I hate such stiffness, particularly when my mother is not by."

"Juliana, then—you see the folding-doors are closed now. We have a very deep back room—our dining-room, properly speaking—with a tiny boudoir beyond. When we have friends in the evening we open those doors, and we can accommodate a good number."

"This drawing-room is quite large enough for us, Marie dear. We can talk better than we could in one of those great Belgrave-square rooms. Now then, to tell you how I managed to come and see you. Mamma—you know I call her so sometimes to please her, though I like 'mother' so much better—wanted to go with a lady to some charity sale.—By the bye, you know her."

"Know your mother?"

"No, dear,—the lady. You must remember the old lady you met at Lentworth, Lady Oglethorpe, a dreadful old person, aunt of Mr. — Ah! I see you know her. So, as we're only in town for a few days, *en route* from Boulogne to Middleshire, I asked my mother to let me come alone. The fact is I want to extort a promise from you to pay us a visit, with Mr. Oldham, at Christmas. Our attempt to meet last Christmas failed, you know. In order to be more fortunate this time I would not trust to writing, but am here to have a positive answer. My proposal is that you come to us three days before Christmas day, and stay till at least three days after New Year's day—in fact, make out a fortnight. And I've my father's particular direction to say that if you're not above mixing business with pleasure——"

"I understand you," Marie broke in. "Your father is very liberal—I've had ample experience of his generosity. Pray, dear Juliana, thank him in my name. But this shall be a

holiday visit—a pleasure trip, nothing else. I'm glad to say I've been doing wonderfully well, earning a good deal of money for a beginner; besides which I've had a little *héritage*—over forty thousand francs: it sounds large in French money; about sixteen hundred pounds English—from a relation of my father; so we think we have a right to enjoy ourselves."

"Which I sincerely trust you will at Lentworth, Marie. At least, it shall not be our fault if you do not. Well, then, it's a settled thing. You must make a note of the day you are to come. I know what a systematic girl you are—I wish I had half your orderly habits."

"Don't wish for anything more than you have, Juliana. My habits are but the result of my mode of life. Professional people are the slaves of time—time is the slave of people of fashion. There's an epigram for you; but it's not my own; I had it from a professional man"—(Frank Aylesmere to wit)—"But you have yet to tell me how you like my dear old Boulogne, and whether you enjoyed your visit there."

"Oh yes—so much!—so very much!—that is, for—for a part of the time. Latterly I began to find it a—a little dull."

"I suppose as the season drew to a close?"

"Oh! the season made little difference. We knew hardly anybody there, beyond interchanging cards. Friends came over from England, and they—they left. In short, I am not sorry to come away."

It required not Marie's exceptional powers of observation to detect the changes which, in the utterance of these few words, passed across Juliana's countenance, changes, in fact, expressing exactly the unspoken meaning of those words. But Juliana, as if suddenly becoming conscious of having exposed herself to the attention of her quick-sighted friend, changed the subject, and pointing to an admirably executed portrait of Marie, hanging on the wall, asked her by whom that speaking likeness was painted.

And now Marie, in her turn, exhibited a certain confusion, and powerful as was her self-control, it was with a deep blush that she answered, "Mr. Heartly."

"Heartly!" Juliana exclaimed, "surely I know the name. Yes, I've heard of him—Oh, I've heard a good deal about Mr. Heartly. Was he not lately made an Associate?"

"He was. He's very clever. I don't wonder you have heard of him."

"Well, I heard one of his friends speaking about him."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, but a person you are not likely to know. I think I shall probably make his acquaintance one of these days."

"I hope you will. You should sit to him for your portrait—a full length. You'd make a sweet picture. I must try and win over Mr. Leadstone to my notion."

"Oh! My father will do anything I wish of that sort. But I shall have recourse to the intervention of—of another person."

"Another person, eh, Juliana?—No name given. You're very mysterious!"

"Perhaps so, Marie. I have my reasons. One of these days my little mystery may become an important revelation—to be made to you, dearest, the first of all my friends!" Then suddenly rising, Juliana hid her beautiful eyes, wet with tears, and her lips quivering with emotion, in Marie's bosom. "But you must not think," she continued, "of my foolish words. It may be I've no right to allude to anything of the sort. You know, Marie, *we* live in such a false, hollow world, with its vile trafficking in affection, and its horrid artifices. I'm almost tired of it, on mere hearsay, before I know actually anything about it. I declare I sometimes wish I were like you, an artist, working for my living; you are at least free to fix your affections where you like."

"Are you sure of that?" Marie asked mournfully.

"Certainly. I mean that you are not bound by our conventionalities. Of course, it must be assumed that you are loved where you love."

"Ah! there it is! It is all there—all! If we love where we are loved! But, Juliana, how sentimental our talk is becoming! Let's change the subject—or, which is still better, let me play you a lovely new piece I'm preparing for a public concert—one of Chopin's last. I think you might

learn it. I'm quite sure it's within your powers—if you'll only work at it sufficiently. Oh! it will require plenty of practice—serious practice!” And hastily placing herself at the piano, Marie dashed off into a brilliant execution of the piece in question, unconsciously pouring into it the full torrent of the emotion raised in her by Juliana's unlucky remark.

Juliana herself, during the performance, recovered her calmness—at least to all appearance; and when Marie rose from the piano, the one seemed as ready as the other to converse airily on ordinary topics: still the termination of the conference, which quickly followed, was really a source of relief to both.

As Juliana stepped into the carriage, her thought was, “My dear Marie, you've betrayed yourself!—your affections are set on that clever painter, without meeting any return. You are to be pitied!”

Marie, the while, as she stood at her window, watching Juliana enter her brilliant equipage, was saying to herself, “My sweet Juliana, can it be possible that you have come to love that handsome Claude Cotherstone, while he has perversely cooled towards you?”

Such was the double error into which these friends had fallen by respectively interpreting each other's unguarded expressions according to their individual imaginings, wanting the key which, in either case, would have given the true explanation.

The utterance of a single word—a name—might have supplied that key, and thus both would have been spared a world of sorrow and heartburnings; but then, as the reader will perceive, the *raison d'être* of the coming chapters ceasing to exist, the chronicler of the fortunes of these fair ones might have summed the same up in a very few pages.

CHAPTER XXII.

WESTWOOD HALL, six miles from Market Dimborough, “the seat”—newspaper style—“of Miles Berrington, Esquire,” was an unpretending, but thoroughly comfort-

able house, of varied architecture and generally picturesque appearance.

This chronicler—by express permission of the hospitable owner—requests the favour of the reader's company to spend there the Christmas of 186—, a Christmas of the modern sort, moist, mild, and misty ; capital weather for sporting, and therefore gladly welcomed by all sportsmen, gentle and simple, among others, of those assembled at the hall, by our friend the Vicomte de Foix.

The aforesaid descendant of the Great Gaston arrived on the 16th of December, not only bag and baggage, guns and rifles, but—urged thereto by some *mauvais plaisants* of the French Jockey Club—with his astounding phaeton and his horses, Elise and Bébé, so well-known to the flâneurs of the Champs Elysées and the Bois de Boulogne.

It is, sitting bolt upright, standing almost in his “trappe,” on a raw afternoon, four days before Christmas Day, that he makes to the reader his first bow, and offers his first shake-hand, in England. And lest such reader should labour under the misfortune of not having become acquainted with M. le Vicomte in an earlier work* the description therein given of the equipage, which he flattered himself was so perfectly *à l'anglaise*, shall be inserted.

It consisted of a mail-phaeton placed on under-springs—twelve separate springs in all ! which threw it up nearly as high as a coach, gaudily plated, and brilliantly painted sky-blue and yellow, drawn by a pair of thick cobby bay horses, too low for it by about a hand and a half, almost buried beneath ponderous harness lavishly covered with armorial plating.

The Vicomte's groom, hight Jean, was clad in a bright blue and yellow livery, with a red cockade in his hat, white buckskin breeches, and boots, the salmon-tinted tops of which extended half-way down the calves of his legs. French boot-makers indeed are apt occasionally to draw their notions of top-boots from the caricatures of the *merveilleux* in the days of Robespierre.

* The Ringwoods of Ringwood.

"Now then, Vicomte, allow me to suggest your letting your horses take it easy up this hill. We are getting into Market Dimborough, and going to visit an eminent country horse-dealer; it would be well to reserve the energies of Elise and Béb  for a sharp pull up in front of his yard. You know English horse-dealers have no very great idea of the foreign article." The speaker is Lumley Berrington, who has on the present occasion trusted his precious person to the Vicomte's more than doubtful coachmanship, *vice* his father, the latter having ridden over with Frank Aylesmere to take luncheon at Lentworth.

The object of the Vicomte's expedition is to look through the stables of that noted Middleshire horse-dealer, John Speedycut, with the double purpose of hiring a couple of hunters for the period of his visits at Westwood and Lentworth—he will proceed to the latter on quitting the former—and of purchasing a pair of English harness horses to take back with him to France. His driving difficulties have, since his arrival at Westwood, been greatly augmented by that exact reversal of the rule of the road which exists between England and France, and he has more than once come to grief by pulling his horses from left to right across a coming vehicle, while he has, by passing others on the left instead of the right, been assailed with much foul language, and menaced by more than one formidable cart-whip. He has at length given up the matter as hopeless, and adopted the habit of requesting the person sitting beside him to direct him, as occasion required, "Right!" or "Left!" This duty Lumley has voted an intolerable nuisance, and is truly glad when, after much perillous steering (by voice) through the narrow bye streets of Market Dimborough, he descends from his towering seat in front of a gateway surmounted by a wooden arch, whereon it is announced in gilded letters that J. Speedycut is licensed to deal in horses, and let hunters and hacks.

J. Speedycut presently, followed by a couple of his men, comes forth at the sound of the great scuffling of horse-shoes made at his door by reason of the Vicomte's sharp pull up. So sharp indeed was it, that Elise and Béb  were nearly thrown on their haunches.

J. Speedycut is a tall, wiry, bow-legged man of sixty odd, with a ruddy, close-shaven, fox-like face.

"Sarvint, gen'lemen!" he says, bringing his forefinger sharply up to his hat. "'Appy to see you, Mr. Lumley. Took you for the Squire. 'Ow wonderful the Squire do wear, to be sure!"

"You're right, Speedy; he does. I only wish I had my young old father's stamina. Here's a foreign gentleman, Speedy, a friend of ours, come to look over your place, and see what you can do for him."

Needless information this to the lynx-eyed dealer, whose practised visual organs had continued to travel from the Vicomte to the Vicomte's remarkable pair of horses and back again all the time he was speaking to Lumley Berrington.

"Won't you come down, Sir?" he asked M. de Foix. "My man'll take your phaeton into the yard. Hi! Ladder this way, Bill!"—with a sly wink at Bill—" 'Elp the Mar-quee down!"

Speedycut had a fixed idea that, as foreigners never came to England for any other purpose than to buy horses, and that such foreigners were invariably either Marquees or Dookes, often with unlimited credit on foreign governments, they were always prepared to pay handsomely for the animals they bought.

Bill had rushed up the yard, and now brought out a ladder such as is used for assisting ladies to descend from the top of a coach; but by the time he arrived, the Vicomte had descended from his altitude on the phaeton by one series of steps, while Jean ascended to the driving seat by a corresponding series on the other side; so Speedycut's joke—such as it was—passed unappreciated by his new customer, and uncomprehended by the slowly thinking Lumley Berrington.

"Now, then, Mr. Lumley, sir, what can I have the honour o' doin' for the Marquee?" asked Speedycut, thrusting his hands, one of which grasped an ashen riding switch, into his coat pockets.

Lumley explained, firstly, what was the actual rank of the customer he had brought; secondly, what Speedycut might have the honour of doing for that customer.

"Well then, Mr. Lumley, first we'll talk about the 'unters. Now then let me see," throwing his eye over the customer "he must ride summat under eleven stoane."

"Ah! Je comprends. I tell you my veight," producing a note book, "Voyons—voyons! Le voici!"

While the Vicomte was turning kilogrammes first into pounds then into stones, Speedycut, begging his pardon, said, if he pleased, a few pounds more or less didn't matter much, they wouldn't quarrel about them, but say eleven stoane.

"C'est bien. Disons eleven stonnes."

"Then I suppose, Marquee—I mean Viscount, you're accustomed to ridin'?"

"Parbleu! I once ride a stipple-chasse."

"Steeple-chase! Oh! indeed! Did you win it, Viscount?"

"No, not quite, but my horse not far off. After he leave me in a water jump, he gallop in alone."

"I see all about it."—Then in a low tone to Lumley—"I must let un 'ave 'osses as 'll go o' theirselves; only you know, Mr. Lumley, them's 'osses as is worth a sight o' money."

"Vicomte," said Lumley, prudently desiring to avoid responsibility towards either party, "Mr. Speedycut understands exactly what you require; you had better place yourself entirely in his hands, both as regards the horses and their price."

"I require"—the Vicomte spoke this loftily—"the most perfect hunting horses which Monsieur Spe—Spi—Oh! I despair of his name—can let me have, and I pay him with pleasure whatever price he charge."

Speedycut, though as keen as a razor in his business transactions, was as straightforward and upright a man as it was possible to find in that particular line; and he knew that when he told Lumley Berrington, (whom he had known from a boy,) that the furrin nobleman might trust him, Lumley Berrington, himself cautious in business to the verge of suspicion, would believe him.

Nothing, therefore, remained but that the two hunters which the dealer said he had in his eye for the Viscount should be shown to the Viscount.

"Bill!" he cried to his man, "call some 'un, and strip first Brown Duchess, then Sir 'Arold. The Viscount 'ud loike to pass 'is 'and over 'em. This way, gen'llemen, please! Stable C. There! Viscount! Second stall, that's the lady—Brown Duchess. A perfecter pictur I never seed afore, and I've seed a tidy many, I promise ye. Just look 'er well over. Take your time; she's wuth it. You'll see she beant one o' they as a short man wants a cheer"—probably chair—"to get on to. Don't stand over fifteen two. Yet I've seed many a one standin' sixteen one as covered less ground. Then, Viscount, look at 'er substance! arms—thighs, and did ye ever see a better line?"—loin doubtless—"I tell ye what, she's as well able to carry sixteen stoane as my 'and is to carry this 'ere ash switch, leavin' you foive stoane in 'and. She'll play with *your* weight, Viscount, she'll play with it! she's all but thorough bred; and as to pace, never was the day yet—under them as know'd 'ow to ride 'er, mind—as she warn't among the fust flight. She'll carry ye straight as a die. The fence beant grow'd as'll stop 'er, and she won't pull a ounce at ye. I promise you, Mr. Lumley, it beant the fust comer as I'd trust this 'ere mare to. No, Viscount, when I wants a comfortable ride, and she wants a little gentle exercise, it's 'er as I takes for a day's 'untin'. 'Er figure for sale, I'll mention, is three 'undred and fifty, and I don't care if I never gets it offered me."

The greater part of this highly technical address, delivered with a strange provincial accent, was as so much Hebrew to the Vicomte, who, promising to himself to get it hereafter translated by Lumley, for insertion in his note-book, simply observed in reply, "Quite all that I want. Had I 'sought throughout England I could not have better suited myself."

The praises of Sir 'Arold—Harold, no doubt—a thorough-bred chestnut, were sung in terms equally eulogistic, with such variations as his skilled owner knew how to introduce.

"Now then, for the pair o' pheaton 'osses," Speedycut went on to say. "I've been a thinkin' to myself what I've got in. Price bein' o' no consideration to the Viscount, o' course 'e'll want summat quite A.1. For what's the use, as I allus says, of furrin noblemen a' comin' all this journey by sea

and land to buy a inferior article? Well, the fact is I've got a rare lot on the road from Lincoln fair, and if the Viscount's a goin' to stay in these 'ere parts a fortnight or so, I'd rayther 'e'd wait a bit, and give me another look in. Will that be agreeable to the Viscount, Mr. Lumley?"

Lumley having interpreted to the Vicomte, the latter replied, in substance, that it would be perfectly agreeable to him.

"Then that's settled," Speedycut resumed. "Now let me see. To-day's Tuesday. I suppose the Viscount 'll 'unt with Sir 'Arry Netherfield o' Friday. Quite a show day, you know, Mr. Lumley. The Dun Cow, Blatherstone—Go at once to Squire Leadstone's famous big gorse—as true a find as is within forty mile."

"You hear what Mr. Speedycut says, Vicomte?"

The Vicomte was forced to admit that though he had heard, he had not fully understood the tenour of the dealer's remarks. They having been once more interpreted to him, it was settled that he should make his *début* in the English hunting field on Friday—the day before Christmas day, and further that Speedycut should send Brown Duchess under the care of one of his men to the meet, the Vicomte finding his own way thither.

The customers having partaken of sherry and biscuits in Mr. Speedycut's parlour, baptizing, so to speak, the business relations of the furrin nobleman and the English horse-dealer, the furrin nobleman's horses were put to, not before they, together with Jean, had furnished food for many pleasantries in the yard.

"Vicomte," quoth Lumley, when all was ready, "have you any objection to my taking the reins home?" For albeit having no overweening confidence in himself as a charioteer, Lumley had by this time come to feel absolute distrust in the Vicomte.

"Pas le moindre du monde, mon cher," was the reply; "but you know, Elise and Bébé have the habitude of my hand."

"Beant much o' pullers I should say," interrupted Speedycut, putting his hands into the respective mouths of the steeds in question.

"Oh! not at all, Monsieur Spe—Spi—Ask me not to remember your name—Gentle beasts one and the other."

"Rayther meaty, Vicomte. Gets too much corn and too little work. 'Taint good that, for man or beast"—with which Speedycut administered to the pair, by turns, severe punches in the region of the stomach, causing both mother and son much physical disarrangement, and eliciting from each grunts of a puffy and wheezy character. The meaning of these several remarks and operations was that Speedycut assumed the contingency, in the present case, of that very common proposal in horse-dealing—a swap, and accordingly desired to enlighten himself beforehand both as to the ages of these queer looking furrin animals, and the condition of their wind.

Herein he misjudged his new customer. No earthly consideration would have induced the good little Vicomte to sell in England, there, perchance, to end their career ignobly in hack cab or higgler's cart, these celebrated steeds, scions of a race long identified with his rich Normandy pastures, and rated by him at a sentimental rather than a marketable value.

While Lumley Berrington is doing his best to keep Elise and Bébé up to their collars, through the Middleshire mud, we will cross the country to Lentworth Hall, as the crow flies a distance of between ten and eleven miles; arrived there, we will sit down at the luncheon table hospitably spread in the old wainscoted dining-room.

Mrs. Leadstone occupies her accustomed place, and speaks with much amiability now to the Rev. Mr. St. Ives, now to Miles Berrington, who sit on either side of her, though her eyes often wander to the further end of the table, where Juliana and Frank Aylesmere sit together, smiling and happy, albeit not quite at their ease under the consciousness of Mrs. Leadstone's frequent glances. Mr. Leadstone, even when at home, seldom puts in an appearance at the mid-day meal, but on this particular occasion, were it not that he is absent on county business, we may feel assured that he would be at the table, in order to welcome Frank, and act as a species of buffer against any possible display of hostility on the part of the châtelaine.

Since we lost sight of the family at Boulogne matters have not mended for Mrs. Leadstone's hopes.

Lord Windlesham had, it appears, given his opinion so fully and freely to Aunt Oglethorpe, that the ancient matrimonial *intriguante* had plainly told Mrs. Leadstone it would be impolitic to press Claude upon Juliana for the present. To this Mrs. Leadstone had replied in as many words, that if Mr. Cotherstone did not act, somebody else most undoubtedly would, the "somebody else" in question being strongly supported by Mr. Leadstone. The shrewd dowager, knowing perfectly well who was alluded to, replied, "It's clear to me, Mrs. Leadstone, that Juliana will, in the end, have her own way as far as her father is concerned; no less so that you'll do more harm than good by opposing her. I've married off two generations of nieces, and I'm up to the whole game. Your only chance is in what Claude would call a waiting race. Keep 'somebody else' out of the house if you can, but don't bother her about anybody else in particular!" And from the period of that conversation the intimacy between these two ladies had considerably abated.

Tom Leadstone, who adored his girl, had seen with consternation that shortly after her return from Boulogne her health began to fail her. Questioned on the subject, Mrs. Leadstone had replied to him that he need not alarm himself. It was positively nothing; all his fancy; what could he know about girls? Juliana was certainly not as lively as she used to be. But hadn't she (Mrs. Leadstone) always told him Juliana did not care for the country? The house was dull: they wanted more company in it; nothing but a parcel of old frumps; parsons were all very well in their way—especially "high" ones, who weren't stiff and starched in their manners—but it was possible to get tired of *toujours perdrix*; Juliana could be herself again when the London season came round;—and a good deal more of the same.

Leadstone, unsatisfied by this explanation, wherein he suspected the views of the mother, rather than those of the daughter, as to country-house life, were set forth, had consulted the family medical man—not Blobb, but the provincial Galen—who at once put Juliana through the usual stethoscopic facings. Nothing in the least wrong—sound as

a bell, he had said. He would give her some mild tonics, and was sure he could set her up in no time. But the tonics, persisted in for a good deal over "no time," doing her no good, the Doctor, had volunteered the suggestion that Miss Leadstone might, by some possibility, have something particular on her mind !

Tom Leadstone was at once put on the right scent. He knew she had something very particular on her mind, and he also knew all the ins and outs of that something, in connexion with her mother and her mother's intentions. But what then? Frank Aylesmere, the *origo mali*, had disappeared from the scene, and been no more heard of; nor was it possible for him (Tom Leadstone) to take any steps remedial of such disappearance.

Mrs. Leadstone knew perfectly well how to account for the continued state of apathy and languor by which Juliana was oppressed. She was, however, little alarmed by it, because not only did she refuse to believe that women ever die of broken hearts, but she laid the flattering unction to her soul that this "girlish fancy" for young Aylesmere, which possessed her daughter, would itself die a natural death, provided the object could be kept long enough away from her.

This was the state of things when, one day early in December, Mr. Leadstone brought from Westwood Hall a piece of intelligence which at the same time revived Juliana's hopes and extinguished her mother's.

Frank Aylesmere was coming to spend Christmas with the Berringtons, and his old friend Miles—Tom said this very boldly and even defiantly in presence both of his wife and his daughter—had promised to bring him over to see them, engaging, moreover, that all the Westwood party would dine at Lentworth on New Year's Day !

From that moment Juliana's whole being seemed transformed. Her lassitude gave place to activity of mind and body; she resumed her rides with her father, and in a week she lost every trace of illness. As for Mrs. Leadstone, while she could not but rejoice at Juliana's recovery—for in her own peculiar way she also loved her daughter—she saw in that recovery the token of a coming triumph over herself and the cause she had championed. Under this triumph she

could not bring herself to sit down tamely; her exasperation was the more intense since she could not dispute where there was nothing to dispute about, nobody to dispute with. It had been announced that Frank Aylesmere was coming to spend Christmas with a neighbour; but that fact concerning him, once stated, his name was no more mentioned in her presence; and even though Juliana, Mr. Leadstone, Gibson, Phibbs, and a score of the old people about the place might be—as she doubted not they were—privately speculating upon his approaching visit and its possible consequences, she had no ground for interference.

But as the time of Frank's arrival at Westwood drew near, her passion began to give way before her policy. After all, she argued with herself, things might not turn out so badly as she feared. It did not necessarily follow that, because Frank was coming into the neighbourhood, he would at once commence a fierce assault upon Juliana's affections. Moreover, she reflected that a doubtful road to Juliana's love for Juliana's mother would be her declaration of war against Juliana's "fancy," however "girlish" she might choose to consider it.

Accordingly, Frank had, on the occasion of his first visit—the present was his third in the course of four days—been received by Mrs. Leadstone with an external graciousness to which no exception could possibly be taken. To be sure, she had never lost sight of him so long as Juliana was with him,—a degree of vigilance of which, however displeasing to them, the youthful pair had no right to complain.

So here they now are, side by side, at the luncheon table. Although in so small a party confidential conversation is scarcely possible, they have contrived to make sundry allusions to the Boulogne Theatre, the Boulogne Western pier, and Frank's last infructuous visit to the Château R. Once, too, Juliana having slyly asked how Frank had disposed of a certain left-hand glove belonging to her, he had, by way of answer, contrived, while pretending to look for something on the floor, to press tenderly beneath the table the hand which that glove had encased. This, it must be admitted, was a hazardous proceeding; but by good luck at that very moment the High Priest—Leadstone's nickname for St. Ives—held

Mrs. Leadstone's attention fixed upon the great Reredos question, then much agitated.

After luncheon Miles Berrington, who, had he been a woman, could not have entered more ardently into the rôle of matchmaker, suggested a walk through the hot and green houses. Blindly speculating on certain catarrhal symptoms which he had perceived in "mamma," he had hoped she might bid the party go through this acre of glass without her. Mamma, however, was, as her husband would have said, "up to snuff," and replied that as the Vicomte de Foix would be coming over with them the following day, it would be desirable to adjourn the proposed walk till then. A short-sighted policy, this of Mrs. Leadstone's, after all, as she gained by it nothing but the chance of what a single day might bring forth.

Music was then substituted for the walk, and it gave Frank the opportunity of turning over the leaves for Juliana, and Juliana that of requesting Frank to sing one of his "nice merry songs."

"Partie remise n'est pas partie perdue," Frank had whispered to Juliana at the conclusion of the little discussion about the walk through the hot-houses. Mrs. Leadstone's delay of one day proved a loss instead of a gain to her. A brook dammed up for twenty-four hours may become a swollen torrent. Twenty-four hours' delay in the much desired occasion of free communication with Frank had a similar effect upon Juliana's impetuous nature, while her growing attachment to him was equally fanned by her mother's manifest opposition to her choice and by her father's apparent acquiescence in it.

The next day brought the Westwood party again to Lentworth, augmented by the Vicomte and Lumley Barrington. Thus numerously attended, Mrs. Leadstone was less able than on the previous day to watch and control her daughter's movements. Furthermore, it seemed as if a legion of foes was banded together against luckless "mamma." Mr. Leadstone had remained at home. The Vicomte, put up to the game by Miles Berrington, hung about "Madame Leston" with a flow of incessant chatter, and had he broken down at any point, Lumley was at hand ready to take up the running.

Thus befriended, it was not surprising that Juliana and Frank should have found opportunities for saying to each other a great many things of that character which—let Mamma storm or rave as she might—never could be unsaid, never forgotten. Of the exact force of the expressions thus reciprocally used, or the precise meaning of the terms wherein one responded to the other, neither retained a very accurate recollection. Few persons do in such cases. Enough that when this, to them, eventful visit came to an end, they parted with the feeling that they had entered into a life-long engagement with one another, though as yet bound but by those vows which are recorded in hearts alone!

That young old Berrington made a tolerably accurate guess as to what had passed between Frank and Juliana was evident; for as he was leaving, he took his god-daughter apart, and whispered to her, "I suspect a certain little soft heart is fluttering wildly and anxiously. Have no fear, my child, but be not precipitate. For the attainment of a really happy conclusion your mother must be propitiated!" and afterwards, as he walked round to the stable with Frank, he said, "My boy, that sweet creature is ready to become your wife whenever you ask her, but for Heaven's sake don't hurry matters. If you do, you run the risk of having for the term of Mrs. Leadstone's natural life—ahem!—the devil's own mother-in-law!"

(To be continued.)





ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS : No. II. ROBERT BURNS.

IN writing his "Memoir of Burns" for the Aldine Series of Poets Sir H. Nicolas thought it necessary to complain that most of Burns's biographers were Scotchmen, and to insinuate broadly enough that, as being interested parties, they should all have been held as incompetent. "In labouring," said he, "to exalt their national poet they have extenuated his faults, and even denied many of his vices. According to the order in which they followed each other, their admiration has increased; and the merits of even the most valuable lives of Burns are lessened by the panegyrical tone that is everywhere conspicuous." The first point made by Sir Harris is that Burns is *their* (i.e. his biographers') "national poet." Have they not, he argues, good reason to be proud of him, such a rarity as he is in those northern parts? But the deplorable thing is that they cannot measure their jubilation, cannot modulate their notes of triumph till they grate not upon the Southron's ear. And yet Sir Harris Nicolas's own memoir was written for a series of poets that were reckoned not as of this or that nationality—not as Englishmen, Scotchmen, or Irishmen—but as "British poets." Probably, indeed, if the selection were to be made now, they would be spoken of together as "English poets," and no intelligent reader would dream for a moment that all writers living north of the Tweed were excluded. It was by no means as their national poet that the early biographers of Burns proclaimed their hero. The very first words of Wilson's magnificent essay, for example, are:—"Burns is by far the greatest poet that ever sprung from the bosom of the people, and lived and died in an humble condition." Perhaps writers of the type of Sir H. Nicolas would say that the

essayist was thinking of his own people—the peasantry of Scotland—when he made such a sweeping remark, and that it was all very well if only he would make less noise about it. Yet, there is a sense in which nationality has something to be set to its credit in this matter. In many respects Burns's language—so uncouth to the modern English ear and eye—is nearer to that standard English of the fourteenth century, written by Chaucer and Barbour, than the metrical talk of the philosophic Wordsworth, or the elaborate vocabulary of the existing *Daily Telegraph*. Burns is not the “national poet” of his earlier biographers because he and they happen to be Scotchmen, but because they are all English-dividing mortals, and because they have succeeded together to a great literary inheritance. The charges were not worth refuting—not worth saying a word about—did it not happen that the only really good biographies of the poet are by Scotchmen, down to the present time, and that some intelligent readers are too apt to believe rash accusations on the first blush.

Then, we read, “they have extenuated his faults, and even denied many of his vices.” There is something startling in that when we learn that the biographers the writer is thinking of include among them such men as Allan Cunningham, Sir Walter Scott, and Dr. Currie. He mentions also Wordsworth and Lockhart, but the one was not a countryman of the Ayrshire ploughman's in Sir H. Nicolas's meaning, while the other was long (however unjustly) believed by some people to be capable of any extravagance. Yet Lockhart was anything but a fool, and we fancy there are abundant readers ready to say the same for the other biographers named, so that we quickly reduce this charge to comparatively small dimensions. It means, at the worst, that these men were not under the hallucination that it was their business to expose to posterity the outrages of a libertine or a foot-pad; it means, at the best, that they knew how to interpret such an injunction as is contained in these strong words—

Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,
To silence envious tongues,

For why should it be thought necessary to rake up from the decaying refuse of the past all that can possibly be coloured to do harm to the memory of a genius like Burns? Such a process is simply akin to that tendency of the many-headed Hydra, Evil-speaking, which results in admiration of the blot on the 'scutcheon and continuous reminders of darker days before these bright triumphal passages. It is a curious twist in human nature that thus makes it rejoice in mistake and mishap, rather than success and integrity. We are all ready to reiterate the dramatist's epigrammatic summary—

Men's evil manners live in brass ; their virtues
We write in water,

but the majority of us continue to give emphasis to the criticism implied. If, then, Burns's biographers kept back something that scandal would have enabled and encouraged them to repeat and stamp with their authority, is it not less to their shame and more to their credit ; and, at the very lowest estimate, if it is a weakness does it not most certainly lean to virtue's side? Just as it is to the pure that all things are pure, so it is only the discriminating and the large-hearted that can face all the details of any career whatever (Burns's or another), and judge aright. For one student of character that reads the Old Testament to his edification there are at least a hundred who will agree with the critical boor whose criticism could see in the sweet singer of Israel nothing but a heartless villain. How shall such obduracy yield to accept the proposition that this of all men was the man after God's own heart? It cannot be till after some grasp has been got of the relation of motives to deeds, and of errors to penitence. Hear Burns himself in one of his touching veins—

What's done we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted.

On the whole, would it not be an honourable distinction to "extenuate faults," or even "deny vices" (if possible), in the company of Sir Walter Scott, were those faults and vices those of Robert Burns? It is all the difference of soaring

aloft with the eagle "in the azure deep of air," and of croaking in the marsh with the monotonous and ungainly frog. It ought to be a credit to a biographer to have a "panegyric tone" in speaking of a genius like Burns. It would show that the man's heart was right, that he knew what was really worthy of admiration.

Principal Shairp, in his recent monograph, has been too anxious to satisfy such first-principles of biographical writing as those enunciated by Sir H. Nicolas. He is determined to put a strong case against the poet—not, it would seem, with the design of elevating his genius by contrast with his character and conduct, but from the high standpoint of a moral censor. The unimpassioned moral critic has always a decided advantage over his emotional fellow-beings. They wear, so to speak, their heart on their sleeves; he has simply to observe and reflect. Now, it becomes a very serious question whether it is perfectly legitimate and fair, in a case like Burns's, to draw out such an indictment as the ample surviving materials readily supply groundwork for. Is it right to judge a man like Burns, who was always, in his direct and simple straightforwardness of character, on the confessional, as one would judge ordinary social agents who take care to "play their part" in life's game, and whose mind to them (in a special sense) their kingdom is? It were folly, of course, to uphold the author of the "Jolly Beggars" and "Tam o' Shanter" as a great religious teacher, in the ordinary acceptance of these words; but is it just to his memory to write and speak as if the likelihood is that he must have been quite the reverse? It would surely be better to accept Burns as he is to be found in his writings (especially in his poems), and to deal tenderly by the story of his life, every chapter whereof is so thoroughly aglow with the brightness of the midday sun.

To write well about Burns one would need to have had an exceptional experience. He was so thoroughly the man of the people that something like intimacy with the ways and doings of those with whom he mingled would be a remarkable advantage to a biographer. It would save him from the danger of going astray on several delicate critical points. It is to a knowledge of this kind that we must attribute largely

the rare appreciation and the enthusiasm of men like Scott and Christopher North. The man who wrote "Hallowe'en" could be understood and esteemed by the men that conceived "The Antiquary" and "The Trials of Margaret Lyndsay." It is not quite apparent that Principal Shairp has more than a book knowledge of the Scottish common people. That of itself may not be a great loss to one whose strength lies in cultured criticism, but it is a decided drawback in the estimate he is forced to give of Burns. For instance, in speaking of the material of these gems, "My Nannie, O," and "Mary Morison," he writes thus:—

These songs render the whole scenery and sentiment of those rural meetings in a manner at once graphic and free from coarseness. Yet, truth to speak, it must be said that those gloaming trysts, however they may touch the imagination and lend themselves to song, do in reality lie at the root of much that degrades the life and habits of the Scottish peasantry.

This is, of course, an honest and straightforward opinion, but it is at the same time that of one who has heard instead of observing, whose judgment is rather the outcome of *a priori* reasoning than the result of personal familiarity. Principal Shairp has, no doubt, many good men and sturdy moralists on his side, but among them they simply make up cumulative opinion and do not represent direct experience. One is sorry to think that Principal Shairp should have no faith in the words of his own delightful ballad "The Bush aboon Traquair," especially where he sings—

They were blest beyond compare
When they held their trystin' there.

It is a sorry device to overlay with beautiful art what, according to the Principal's criticism, is a rotten and pernicious social condition. Why should the poets think it their duty thus wilfully to impose on the romantic emotions of their readers? Of course, poetry is not bound to communicate facts, but surely she ought to be at the same time above the miserable policy of praising what is false and corrupt. On the whole, it will be better to believe Burns himself on the subject that inspired such ballads as "Mary Morison." These are his own words:—

The grave sons of science, ambition or avarice, baptize these things by the name of follies. To the sons and daughters of labour and poverty, they are matters of the most serious nature; to them the ardent hope, the stolen interview, the tender farewell, are the greatest and most delicious parts of their enjoyments.

Connected with this, in some measure, is the poet's romantic experience at Kirkoswald, at which place he had gone to study mensuration rather than the science of the Beautiful and lyric poetry. "Still," says Principal Shairp, "the mensuration went on till one day, when in the kail-yard behind the teacher's house, Burns met a young lass, who set his heart on fire, and put an end to his mensuration." This incident should always have the poet's own pithy account along with any other narrative. In the case of such a bit of bald prose as this of Principal Shairp's it is absolutely indispensable. It becomes, by contrast, a perfect little pastoral, and stands as graceful pioneer to those glorious bursts of love-song yet to come. "Stepping into the garden, one charming noon, to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel,"

Like Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower.

Is it not better to feel the poet's idealism than the critic's gratuitous grumble? The account of Burns himself is, no doubt, a little stilted, but that is quite in keeping with the youthful glow of enthusiasm that was undoubtedly the result of his garden experiments.

A most difficult question in reference to all writers of love poetry, and one that is particularly complex in the case of Burns, rests on this very suddenness of emotion, this passionate intensity, which involves the affections of the sexes. Love-at-first-sight is a highly interesting and romantic thing, but frequent ebullitions of that nature are nothing short of phenomenal. Wide as the poles asunder stand your ardent Romeo and your calculating veteran Don Juan. And where is the impassioned idealist—the lover in words—to come in? Is he Romeo, or is he Don Juan, or only something of each? Or does he stand entirely apart from both, working himself up to a pitch of artificial admiration, lashing himself into fury of factitious passion, in the interests of his professional

advancement? On the whole, Principal Shairp inclines to think that there was a strong dash of Don Juan in the nature of Burns. "But love-making—that had been with him, ever since he reached manhood, an unceasing employment. Even in his later teens he had, as his earliest songs show, given himself enthusiastically to those nocturnal meetings—which were then and are still customary among the peasantry of Scotland, and which at the best are full of perilous temptation." It is perfectly clear that Principal Shairp would put a stop to that practice among "jolly shepherds" which consists in kissing a bonnie lassie

'Tween the gloamin and the mirk when the kye comes hame.

But why should he be surprised that Burns practised what was common to young men of his condition? He would have been a coof indeed—and the lasses themselves would have thought it too—had he held aloof in stately puritanic sobriety. What a saint before his time, to be sure—set *him* up with his pretensions and mock-heroic dignity! The canting ploughman would have been the laughing-stock of the neighbourhood. He would have been a choice victim on the hairst rig. Just imagine the buxom lasses giving the poet his fairin' over a wheat-sheaf, especially when he was an acknowledged mysogonist "in his later teens"! "When, pray, does the worthy Principal think that a man is to begin enjoying

A canny hour at e'en,
His arms aboot his dearie, O!

if not "in his later teens?" Yet, he is so struck with Burns's conduct in this matter, that he speaks of him with uplifted hands as not only a most wayward member of society, but a sinner of an outrageously premature order. "Even in his later teens" the poet had begun to feel that the sweetest hours that e'er he spent were spent among the lasses, O! This is just a point as to which a close personal knowledge of the peasantry themselves would keep a biographer from making irrelevant reflections. At the time when the youths at universities are merely lads, young ploughmen of the same age are already able to take their

place as men—to hold that social importance which depends on their being able to make good wages. A totally different question is raised when we consider Burns's relations to Jean Armour and his Highland Mary. In so far as the poet was wrong there he would be condemned as unreservedly by a worthy peasant as by a moral philosopher or a professor of poetry. It can do no good to become homiletic over it now, just because there is nobody to whom any lesson drawn from it can be of any value; and, above all, because the poet received full forgiveness for whatever was the measure of his guilt from bonnie Jean herself. Altogether, it is possible to make too much of the love-making; or else we must condemn those matchless love-songs of Burns's by virtue of which he stands head and shoulders above every other lyric poet.

What has been said about a young ploughman's early independence goes far to explain the attitude Burns took towards the aristocratic society of Edinburgh. When he addressed a preface to the gentlemen of the Caledonian Hunt he reminded them that though challenging their attention to his poetry he was, at the same time, disinclined to conciliate too far, because he could hold the plough and was therefore independent. A declaration of this kind shows the essential thoroughness of the description which portrays

A bold peasantry their country's pride.

Burns may be the king of peasants, but he is representative as well. Hence his countrymen fully appreciate the stand he made among the literary and social nobility of Edinburgh. It never surprises them in the very slightest that he should have expressed himself as if he were entitled to be listened to, when surrounded by the great and the learned, any more than it surprises them to find in Sir Walter's gallery of portraits such a noble impersonation as Jeanie Deans. Indeed, their astonishment would have arisen had he shown himself destitute of resources when taken out of his ordinary circumstances. Yet Principal Shairp is manifestly offended with the poet's self-possession. "There seems," he says, "little doubt from all the accounts that have

been preserved, that Burns in conversation gave forth his opinions with more decision than politeness. He had not a little of that mistaken pride not uncommon among his countrymen, which fancies that gentle manners and consideration for other's feelings are marks of servility. He was for ever harping on independence, and this betrayed him into some acts of rudeness in society which have been recorded with perhaps too great minuteness." One has only to remember that Burns had come from Ayrshire, unused to the etiquette of polished city society, but with a consciousness of extraordinary genius welling up within him, to be able to answer fully such a charge as this. Burns was under no special obligation to these people that he should try to refine away his personality in their presence. Had he felt that he was, he would not have been the man of letters of whom English readers have good reason to be proud.

In further connexion with the poet's independence there is to be noted his large sympathetic fellow-feeling, his love of good company wherever it was to be found. It is not remarkable that Burns should have sometimes mingled with men other than aristocrats when in Edinburgh and elsewhere; indeed, the surprising and contemptible thing would have been had he done otherwise. There were drinking habits in those days, among the middle and upper classes of society, such as this age cannot easily realize. We shall be less surprised at Burns's convivialities if we read some of the records of the time, even if we learn from such a work as "Constable and his Correspondents" what prevailed in good society at a somewhat later period. Both when he was at Edinburgh and after he went to live at Dumfries the poet attended many convivial meetings, where he found, of course, that he was easily first, and where unfortunately he no doubt taxed his sensitive nature too far. Principal Shairp discovers in this Burns's desire to feel himself what he somewhat coarsely calls "cock of the walk," a criticism which is surely based on a misunderstanding of the poet's character. Christopher North answered the charge in that famous essay of his, which is thus far the best tribute to Burns's memory. "No need had he," exclaims Christopher, "to crow among dunghills. If you liken him to a bird at all,

let it be the eagle, or the nightingale, or the bird of Paradise." It was evidence of his independence that Burns should have found companions to his taste in Edinburgh, "in taverns down the closes and wynds of High-street," and it was surely no derogation from his dignity if the men he met there were "lawyers, writers, schoolmasters, printers, shopkeepers, tradesmen," even if these did become before the night's end "ranting, roaring, boon companions." So far as Edinburgh is concerned there is Dugald Stewart's evidence that Burns never appeared to him other than he would have expected. "I should have concluded," he says, "in favour of his habits of sobriety, from all of him that ever fell under my own observation." Then, as a set-off to the doleful picture of Dumfries society in the time of Burns, as drawn by Principal Shairp, there is Allan Cunningham's testimony to "the pleasing society which, in the year 1791, Dumfries afforded." In whatever way the whole question may be looked at, the conclusion is forced upon one, that the poet was swayed by the circumstances in which he was placed, and overset by the habits of the time, while simply acting up to his conviction that the whole world is kin.

Principal Shairp tries to undervalue two poems in connexion with the spirit of independence and the drinking habits. "Scots wha ha'e" he interprets as coming from the poet's sympathy with the extravagance of the French Revolution, while he bewails the possible drinking to excess that may have arisen from the singing of "Willie brewed a peck o' maut." No patriotic Scotchman will accept for a moment this explanation of Bruce's address, even with the added significance of Burns's impatient remarks about the Government which had been able to appoint him to no higher post than that of "gauging beer-barrels." Nor will anybody attach the slightest importance to any conversation, in which unqualified critics like Wordsworth and Mrs. Hemans may have tried to show that the song is not essentially what it has, for all time, been called by Mr. Carlyle. If not the very noblest, it is at any rate among the noblest, of all war-odes. Then as to the inimitable drinking-song, Principal Shairp may of course be exercised, and his readers will sympathize with

him. At the same time, it is a pity he should play into the hands of the teetotal lecturer, who has already maligned poor Burns *ad nauseam*. One might as well grieve over the immorality that may have resulted from the frequent perusal of the Principal's own beautiful ballad, where the lads and lasses are so pathetically described as having been "blest beyond compare" as they courted in the evenings. Christopher North's statement of the effects of this drinking-song is wholly to the point. "We have heard," he says, "'Oh! Willie brewed a peck o' maut', sung after a presbytery dinner, the bass of the moderator giving something of a solemn character to the chorus."

Another poem on which Principal Shairp comments severely is "The Holy Fair." Here he finds that Burns has brought into disrespect one of the most solemn of religious ceremonies. In this criticism too much is asserted, for Burns did not ridicule the celebration of the Holy Communion itself, but the extravagances attendant on the occasion. Burns may or may not have been merely a Deist, as his critic insinuates; but so long as there is no direct proof that he was, it is surely unfair to suggest such a serious inference. The poet's attitude towards religion is one of reverence, but he has no patience with the overweening perfections of "the unco guid." Nor does he think that the cause of true religion is likely to be helped by the stern formalities of the Calvinistic preachers whose strength is their dogmatic fastness, or by the outrageous machinery that moves the observance of the Lord's Supper. It is not so long since rural parishes of Scotland furnished, twice a year, what would have given ample scope for satire similar to that of "The Holy Fair." Even yet there is little room to accuse Burns when what is popularly known as the "Fast Day" is simply an occasion for the reverse of fasting. Satire, of course, is always liable to become exaggerated; but there is something very far wrong when such a satire as "The Holy Fair" is possible. Burns did a substantial service to his countrymen by that poem, which may count for real influence in something like the proportion of one stanza to every thousand "sermons" preached from the Scottish pulpit. Nor has one to go far

from any point in Scotland to convince one's self that Burns had good ground for the composition of "Holy Willie's Prayer." That poem, too, is in the interests of true religion pure and undefiled. There may be madcap frolic in the twinkle of the poet's eye; there may be (and there undoubtedly is) extravagance in his treatment; but his whole nature was roused against irreverence and hypocrisy, and in these, and other poems, he pinned them through for ever. This is not the time of day to estimate the worth of "The Cotter's Saturday Night," either for its religious sentiment or its poetic quality. Nor is it the time of day to set it aside with faint praise. One might observe, however, that there is more likelihood of men's becoming worshippers of the true God through the perusal of that great poem than of their becoming drunkards from singing "Willie brewed a peck o' maut."

Principal Shairp says some wise and weighty and beautiful things about the poems he admires. No living critic is better qualified to estimate the true value of a lyric composition; and, when there is nothing to draw away his attention from the poetry itself, he instantly commands and retains the attention. But it is a pity he should have allowed his dislike of the man to interfere with his criticism of the poet. It is even hardly to the point when (in his enthusiasm for Wordsworth) he is at pains to point out that Burns had little appreciation of the spirit of outward nature. It would have been better if he had dwelt upon "The Vision" as evidence of the poet's imagination and sense of his own undoubted greatness, and shown that, while he could see the beauties of Scottish scenery (as many inimitable touches prove), he felt himself above all the bard of Scotia herself and her people. The spirit of the following Invocation is at once patriotic, self-conscious, and thoroughly religious, and gives the best (and the true) expression of Burns's native nobility:—

O Scotia ! my dear, my native soil !
 For whom my warmest wish to heaven is sent,
 Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
 Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content !

And O ! may heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion weak and vile !
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand, a wall of fire, around their much-loved Isle !

THOMAS BAYNE.

A VISION OF LIFE.

'Tis a rift in the cloud !
Only a narrow streak of blue
Breaking a tearful pathway through
The storm-swept face of heaven dark scowling ;
An opening glimpse of an endless calm,
Dropping 'mid tempest a moment's balm
To soothe the pain of the wild wind's howling,
Through a rift in the cloud.

'Tis a voice in the crowd !
Only the tender plaint of a child
Rising in accents strange and wild,
While toilworn feet drift by unheeding ;
Hurried along by the greed of gain,
Rending the air with a curse of pain,
None pause to list to the wistful pleading,
Of a voice in the crowd.

The rift is gone,
The voice is done,—
Over the waste the storm goes flying ;
Down through the night there moves along,
With shout and with wail, an endless throng
Of the weary quick, and the wearily dying.

NEMO.





PADDY FLYNN'S FLASH :

AN INCIDENT

IN THE PENINSULAR WAR IN 1811.

AT the period in which the following incident occurred, the main body of the British Army, under Lord Wellington, were posted in the North of Portugal, whilst a portion, consisting of Infantry, Cavalry, and some Portuguese Artillery, was stationed on the southern banks of the river Tagus, under the command of General Hill. From this place he was ordered to advance, for the purpose of intercepting and attacking a French Corps which was moving towards the South of Spain—after a long and fatiguing day's march, without seeing or obtaining any intelligence of the enemy, the troops bivouacked in a defile well sheltered, and protected by outposts of Cavalry and Infantry; and in addition to these a patrol of Eight Dragoons under the command of an officer was ordered to proceed still further in advance towards Merida, but not to travel on the road, the object of the expedition being to surprise the enemy if possible. This detachment, although assisted with a Portuguese guide acquainted with the district, had a difficult march, the road being partly through a wood; but our story is more nearly connected with the rear guard consisting of a corporal and private, who, following at a short distance for some time without speaking, at length in a low voice the private asked his comrade if he did not think it quite time to feel tired. His horse did, being obliged to make use of the spur to keep these in advance in sight.

"Yes," replied the corporal; "for I have been in the saddle since four o'clock this morning, and shall be glad of a little rest."

"Well, corporal, I thought you were going to sleep, and had a great mind to give you a song to rouse you up or get you to spake a word."

"Now, Flynn, you know how sternly the captain called 'Silence,' when he heard you talking to some one about wanting to smoke soon after we started."

"Well, Seymour, do you think that was the cause of his sending me to the rear of the troop?"

"Of course it was, and that I had orders to take charge of you. I am only surprised you were not sent back to camp, as he knows your failing, that you will never let a chance slip of telling one of your droll yarns."

"Sure the captain did not think so very bad of me, or he would not have sent a fellow townsman in charge of me."

"No, Flynn, he is aware that you are a good soldier, but you were talking too loud, and if you will only speak quietly we will have a little chat. Now I will ask you first, what is your opinion of the plurality of worlds."

"Och Murder! what a question to ask Paddy Flynn; you might as well enquire of the moon if it could tell you, but there is neither moon nor stars to be seen to-night. And now that puts me in mind of that word plural. Sure it was the Priest of Clogheen that tould me how shocked he was, he saw me in the morning with his servant Biddy Malone, and that same evening he met me when I was having a flirtation with Moya Carey, that it was a dangerous thing for a young man to have a plurality of sweet-hearts at the same time.

"I tould him it was after her brother Paddy Carey she was enquiring, the finest lad in the army, and if he never heard the song about the same boy, and began singing—

'Twas' in the town of nate Clogheen,
Where Sergeant Snap met Paddy Carey,
As bright a lad as e'er was seen,
As brisk as a bee and as light as a fairy.
His brawny shoulders three feet square,
His cheeks like thumping red potatoes.

"'Stop, stop, you rascal,' said the Priest, 'or——'

"Oh! corporal, by the powers, there's the captain and the whole troop waiting for us."

It is related that having proceeded for several miles with-

out any appearance or tidings of the French, the commanding officer, determined to return towards the bivouac, several of the horses showing fatigue which must necessarily have been the case with the men also, some having been in the saddle from four o'clock the previous morning. With the view of resting the horses until relieved by another troop, on arriving at a hollow, leaving videttes to prevent surprise, the troop dismounted, and the dragoons, with our friend Paddy Flynn in the midst of them, rested on various positions, some were seated on the ground, with their chargers' bridle reins in their hands or twisted round their arms, fell into a dose, whilst others, leaning against their horses, loosened the girths. They had not long remained thus, when a sudden click of flint in contact with steel and a flash of light, made doubly luminous by the darkness of the night, frightened the horses, some starting off at full gallop, dragging the dragoons that were unfortunately fastened by the reins through bush and briar until they broke or were stopped; one or two galloped into the camp passing by the sentries, who discharged their muskets, thinking it was an enemy, being unable to see clearly from the darkness of the night, caused indescribable confusion. Upon investigation it transpired that Paddy Flynn, who was a brave and excellent soldier in other respects, but without any thought or discretion, felt desirous of enjoying a pipe of tobacco, and having no idea of the consequences, as he afterwards described it, and no other method of obtaining a light, bit off the end of a cartridge, emptied a good proportion of powder into the pan of the lock of his pistol and pulled the trigger, quite ignorant of the effect it would have on the horses on a dark night.

Luckily for poor Flynn no injury to life or limb was occasioned by this sudden freak, but he was of course for a long time suspended from the duties of a dragoon, and obliged to perform the drudgery of a camp kettle man, during which occupation he had, however, good opportunities of indulging in his favourite amusement of telling stories, more of which we may have an account of hereafter.

No mischief was caused to the expedition by this escapade

of Paddy Flynn's. The French were not aware of the approach of the British, and extremely off their guard; they had fallen back on the town of Arrozo del Molins, where they were completely taken by surprise, not perceiving the British troops until very near, and, being immediately attacked, made a feeble resistance. The French General Gérard, with his corps of three thousand men, were routed and dispersed, a general and colonel of cavalry and upwards of one thousand soldiers being made prisoners.

REFLECTIONS.

SHE sat on the stile,—
And the sweet wild roses
Quivered and swayed in the rustling breeze;
The world around was full of posies.
But oh! my lady was hard to please.
She said, "Wild roses are common weeds:
A face like mine a coronet needs."

She sat on the stile,—
And the wild larks, singing,
Rose up and swam in the air's blue seas;
Sky and earth were with music ringing.
But oh! my lady was hard to please.
She said, "These brown larks are common things:
I would have birds with golden wings."

She sat on the stile,—
And her lover so true
Stole beside as she sat at her ease,
Tenderly looked in her eyes so blue.
But oh! my lady was hard to please.
She said, "These rustics are awkward things:
Beauties like me should be wives for kings."

She sat on the stile,—
And the twilight fell fast,
The larks were silent, the roses still.
The warmth and beauty of day were past,—
Roger returning over the hill.
She said, "Crowns, gold birds and kings are dear,
But one cannot always have one's way—
Wild roses are near,—and brown larks here—
Roger, come back to me, dear, I pray!"

ALICE EVEZARD.

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LITERARY CRITICISM.

CRITICISM is the heritage of all individuals who happen to be possessed of any quality of the mind which will elevate them above their fellows. Criticism is one of those intrinsically good things, which, from injudicious or improper use, has come to be looked upon as an evil; and there is, indeed, no lack of evidence to show that it has been made the instrument of evil in the hands of the envious and the foolish. But what good thing has not?

True criticism is neither fulsome flattery, nor indiscriminate fault-finding. It is a just statement of the beauties and blemishes of the subject criticized; according to the taste and judgment of the critic. The liberty taken to criticize (a very improper application of the word) by inexperienced persons is only in most cases an opportunity for the exhibition of uninformed minds.

It is almost as great folly to feel irritated or flattered by such criticism, as to criticize without judgment. To criticize justly implies the possession of an accurate knowledge of what modern society considers the highest excellence in the department of art or literature to which the work belongs. Nor will the most abundant knowledge suffice, unless it has found a home in a well-cultivated mind.

Yet we cannot model the world on the true principles of cultivated humanity; we must, therefore, endeavour to make the best of what we find. If your work is misjudged, and your highest efforts coarsely condemned, you are not improved by essaying a retort in a similar spirit or language.

No authors ever escaped without a fair share of criticism, no matter what may be the merit of their productions; and even if it be perfection, someone will find a flaw in it, so that if we always expect some adverse criticism, we shall seldom be disappointed. Perhaps it will be some comfort

to those who may receive adverse criticism to know that the world in general underrates your value, and has mostly misunderstood those who have laboured for the good of mankind. For instance, we find that Galileo was persecuted for his discoveries. Even after his death the papers which he wished to be published were burned by an ignorant and bigoted priest, who prevailed on Galileo's wife to trust to his judgment about publishing them. Homer, the greatest of ancient poets, was accused by his critics of stealing what was best in his Iliad and Odyssey from previous authors. Others even went so far as to say that he had abstracted them from some of the temples, although they did not attempt to bring any evidence to prove that any persons but themselves knew of the transaction. It is curious to note how seldom doctors care to take their own medicines; so with the critics, when their own sauce is served up to themselves it becomes very unpalatable.

Cardinal Richelieu was a very severe critic, and nothing appeared to give him more pleasure than the opportunity of criticizing the literary productions of the eminent men who thronged the Court of France in his time.

He once asked Burbon, a distinguished Greek scholar, what his opinion was of a Greek poem which he had himself composed. The professor, not knowing who the author was, and being well acquainted with the style of criticism which the Cardinal liked best, at once condemned the poem in no measured terms, and said that any schoolboy could compose better. This chagrined the Cardinal very much; for such criticism when applied to others was the right thing, but when applied to himself it was totally out of place. So as a reward to Burbon, he had the pension discontinued which that gentleman was in the custom of receiving from the State.

A piece of judicious criticism (perhaps some might be inclined to call it flattery) is recorded of the secretary of Cardinal de Mote, part of whose employment it was to write the sermon as dictated by the Cardinal, previous to its being delivered. Once after having written out a particularly long sermon, he informed de Mote that such a sermon had not been written since the one delivered on the Mount by our

Lord. The Cardinal was shortly afterwards elected Pope, and before he left the conclave, he created his secretary a Cardinal as a reward for his appreciation of his Holiness's sermon. Charles Lever, in his preface to *Con Cregan*, mentions that he collected all the sarcastic and disparaging remarks about his writings, in order to enliven himself when dull by their perusal. It was very different with Pope, who, whenever he read anything of a disagreeable nature about his poems, was noticed to writhe in his chair with anguish. We might aptly compare an author of Pope's temperament to a young mother, who fancies that her baby is the finest, prettiest, and best formed imaginable; and yet how some people will shrink from its touch, as if they would be polluted—which is likely enough. So with the author: his production is perfection itself; and under that impression he resents adverse criticism. It is difficult for writers to appreciate the criticism of others, when they form so high an opinion of their own merit; yet criticism does them good, as it acts like a drastic medicine, clearing away gross humours.

It will be seen by some of the foregoing illustrations that the liberty of criticizing was exercised pretty sharply by the ancients, and that it runs at the present time in nearly the same groove as it did 500 years ago, is evident to any one who has studied the literature of the 19th century. In conclusion, we believe that criticism as practised in modern times is a great social benefit, although it has its faults. Therefore, those of the literary community who fear to have their peace of mind disturbed by criticism must either forego authorship, or not be too susceptible to blame, and rather always remember that detraction is a natural feeling of mankind, to which most of the species are subject.





DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 6.

DEUX poètes français, différents en génie,
Egaux par la douceur, et surtout l'harmonie.

I.

Bonne liqueur pour qui sait en user ;
Gardez-vous bien de trop en abuser.

II.

Ambition de chaque jeune fille :
Heureuse celle au doigt de qui je brille.

III.

La Chouette y portait un instrument qui tue :
Voir le fameux roman du grand Eugène Sue.

IV.

Nom que les soupirants à leurs belles donnaient,
Au temps où Louis Treize et Quatorze régnaient.

V.

Vers la fin de l'été, lorsque jaunit la feuille,
Sur les buissons dorés en riant ou la cueille.

VI.

Un roi français se permettait, ma foi,
De dire avec orgueil : "Ceci, c'est moi !"

PERLIMPINPIN.

SOLUTION OF DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 5.

M	esopotami	A
O	r	A
S	ta	R
E	ch	O
S	ermo	N

Correct answers have been received from : Quite a Young Thing too—S.P.E.—P.V.—Shark—What, Never ?—Brevette—Dowager—La Belle Alliance—Black Beetle—Charmione—Artemisia—Miserere—Nursery—and Beolne ; 14 correct and 40 incorrect—total, 54.



MESOSTICH No. 6.

PAR un triple talent, qu'en lui seul il résume,
Il charme par l'esprit, le crayon et la plume.

I.

Le navire est au port ; restons ici ;
Et, pour y mieux rester, jetons ceci.

II.

Madame Angot, dit-on, l'était :
Est-ce pour ça qu'on l'adorait ?

III.

Ce que le diable apporta sur la terre,
Et que souvent, hélas ! ou nous voit faire.

IV.

Mes amis, je ne la rendrai
Que le plus tard que je pourrai.

CLAIRETTE.

SOLUTION OF MESOSTICH No. 5.

b O b
gl O be

Correct answers have been received from: P.V.—Rum-tifoo—What, Never?—Quite a Young Thing too—S.P.E.—Numántia—Xoc—Black Beetle—Brevette—Shark—Dowager—Hanky-Panky—La Belle Alliance—Charmione—Artemisia—Miserere—Nursery—and Beolne; 18 correct and 29 incorrect—total, 47.

